

Dear polio eradication supporter,

I'm thrilled to write to you following a successful launch event for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI)'s [new investment case](#) to finish the job on polio. By raising the US\$ 4.8 billion needed to fully implement the Polio Eradication Strategy 2022-2026, together we can deliver on our promise of a polio-free world.

The event demonstrated the power of the GPEI partnership including countries, donors, and partners. Thank you to Dr. Tedros, Director-General of the WHO, and Catherine Russell, Executive Director of UNICEF, for [joining](#) to provide important updates on ending wild polio transmission in the final endemic countries and stopping outbreaks of all forms of the virus around the world. I'm also grateful to Dr. Shahzad Baig, National Coordinator for the Pakistan Polio Eradication Programme, Honorable Khumbize Kandodo Chiponda, Minister of Health of Malawi, and Honorable Yolanda Awel Deng Juach, Minister of Health in South Sudan, for painting a picture of what GPEI activities look like in communities, and how polio infrastructure is helping to support health systems more broadly. Dr. Rochelle Walensky, Director of the CDC, introduced a video of some of the [heroic polio workers](#) around the world, and Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, Regional Director for Africa of the WHO, and George Laryea-Adjei, Regional Director of UNICEF South Asia, joined other POB members and myself to [call for renewed global commitment](#) to reach the finish line as well.

Special thanks also to Niels Annen, Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany, for announcing that [Germany will host](#) the GPEI's upcoming pledging moment in October at this year's World Health Summit in Berlin. As a longstanding champion of polio eradication, it is excellent to see Germany throw its support behind the investment case and call on stakeholders to ensure the program receives the US\$ 4.8 billion necessary to end this disease.

The need to fully fund and implement the GPEI strategy was [underscored](#) this month during a meeting of the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE), the global advisory board for the WHO on immunization. SAGE shared our concern over the detection of wild polio in Malawi and the recent spread of variant polioviruses (cVDPVs) to places like Israel and Ukraine, where population mobility remains very high. Importantly, SAGE agreed that we have an incredible opportunity to stop the transmission of wild polio and protect children for years to come.

This opportunity is indeed historic. After decades working to end wild polio transmission, just six cases were reported globally in 2021. Last week, however, we received confirmation that a child was paralyzed by wild poliovirus in Pakistan for the first time in over a year – a sobering reminder that until transmission is fully stopped, polio remains a threat to all children. The response from the new government in Pakistan has been swift, with a plan to vaccinate 40 million children in a national campaign next month. Earlier this week, Prime Minister Sharif convened an emergency meeting on polio where he personally committed to working with the polio program to address final barriers to eradication.

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Despite a difficult environment, the program is also making progress in Afghanistan, where in November 2021, nationwide polio campaigns restarted for the first time in over three years. In the months since, some [8.5 million children in Afghanistan](#) have been vaccinated against polio, with many receiving protection for the first time. However, approximately 1.5 million children continue to be missed because of a prohibition on house-to-house vaccination. With wild poliovirus transmission at record-low levels, it will be critical to reach all children to ensure the final chains of transmission are stopped.

The next few months hold the opportunity to stop wild poliovirus forever and it's critical that the GPEI raise the US\$ 4.8 billion to finish the job. Thank you in advance for your support in helping us get there.

Best regards,



Christopher J. Elias, MD, MPH
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Chair, Polio Oversight Board, Global Polio Eradication Initiative

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