

Global Vaccine Summit yields US\$4 billion in funding commitments to polio endgame plan



Rotarians are playing a vital role in advocating government support for global polio eradication through meetings with world leaders and public awareness events.

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The [2013-18 Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan](#) and about US\$4 billion in funding commitments took center stage at the Global Vaccine Summit in Abu Dhabi 24-25 April.

Developed by the [Global Polio Eradication Initiative](#) (GPEI), the plan is designed to interrupt transmission of the wild poliovirus by the end of 2014, strengthen routine immunization, lay the groundwork for securing a lasting polio-free world, and transfer the eradication initiative's assets to other public health efforts.

The GPEI estimates the new plan will cost about US\$5.5 billion.

Governments, nongovernmental organizations, foundations, and other donors announced [the commitments](#) during the vaccine summit. They also called upon additional donors to commit the additional US\$1.5 billion needed to ensure eradication.

The [Global Vaccine Summit](#) was hosted by Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, in partnership with United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Bill Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The event drew 300 representatives from the GPEI partners and national governments, health experts, business leaders, and philanthropists. Rotary's International PolioPlus Committee Chair Robert Scott, India National PolioPlus Committee Chair Deepak Kapur, and PolioPlus Director Carol Pandak represented Rotary at the summit. Rotary polio ambassador and actress Archie Panjabi emceed the event.

"This plan isn't just a polio eradication plan, it's a global immunization plan with the goal of ending polio while improving efforts to protect all children, including the most vulnerable, with life-saving vaccines," said Gates. "Successful implementation of the plan requires a significant, but time-limited investment that will deliver a polio-free world and pay dividends for future generations."

Rotary International, along with the World Health Organization, UNICEF, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, are global partners in the GPEI. One of Rotary's chief responsibilities in the worldwide effort is advocacy. In addition to contributing more than US\$1.2 billion to the GPEI, Rotary has helped secure over \$9 billion from donor governments since the initiative began in 1988. It is estimated that polio eradication could save the world US\$40-50 billion by 2035.

Gates announced that his foundation would commit to one-third of the total cost of the GPEI's budget over the plan's six-year implementation, for a total of \$1.8 billion. A new group of philanthropists joined Gates in supporting the new plan, with commitments of an additional \$335 million: the Albert L. Ueltschi Foundation, Alwaleed Bin Talal Foundation-Global, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Carlos Slim Foundation, Dalio Foundation, Foundation for a Greater Opportunity established by Carl C. Icahn, and Tahir Foundation.

Long-time donors Canada, Germany, Norway, and the United Kingdom, as well as Nigeria, made new commitments, and the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi announced a second pledge to polio eradication of US\$120 million, adding to his first contribution made in 2011. A range of other donors, including the Islamic Development Bank, Ireland, and Japan, helped round out the additional pledges.

Rotary, the initial donor to the GPEI, pledged its commitment through 2018 to raise funds and mobilize support of the endgame strategy. "To

stop polio once and for all, we need to act quickly so that children are fully protected and countries are not re-infected,” said RI President Sakuji Tanaka. “This takes the commitment of national and local leaders where polio still exists, the continued support of donor countries, and the steadfast commitment of heroic vaccinators.”

Polio has decreased by 99 percent to just 22 cases this year (as of 24 April), and only three countries – Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria – remain endemic for the disease. Without eradication, however, the disease could come back and paralyze more than 200,000 children worldwide every year within a decade.

The extensive polio eradication infrastructure established by the GPEI is also helping to fight measles, malaria, and other diseases, along with aiding response to disaster-related health emergencies. After polio is eradicated, the endgame plan calls for the transfer of the GPEI’s assets to ensure lasting public health benefits.

“After millennia battling polio, this plan puts us within sight of the endgame,” said World Health Organization Director-General Margaret Chan. “The extensive experience, infrastructure and knowledge gained from ending polio can help us reach all children and all communities with essential health services.”

- Become an [advocate](#) by contacting elected officials, business leaders, friends, and the press to encourage support for eradicating polio.
- See the February edition of [Global Outlook: A Rotarian’s Guide to Advocacy for Polio Eradication](#)
- [Download](#) or [video](#) about advocacy for ending polio
- Be part of the [World’s Biggest Commercial](#)