It has been three years since Nigeria has had a case of wild poliovirus.  What an incredible accomplishment!  With this milestone, the process of certification will begin, and by next year we hope to announce that Nigeria is certified as polio free.  Just five years ago this seemed impossible, and yet now we are on the cusp of victory over polio in Nigeria.

We still have a tough fight in Pakistan and Afghanistan, but the challenges presented by those countries are no different than the challenges we had in Nigeria.  Remember this day, and look forward to having a similar day for Pakistan and Afghanistan.

We are so close to fulfilling our promise begun in 1985, and we are here because of your efforts and those of Rotarians worldwide who have had the fortitude to stick with this difficult task.  This is YOUR victory.  I applaud your work!

So far this year we are at 65 cases of parallysis from wild polio virus and 44 from cVDPV (vaccine derived polio)

Pakistan still is the biggest area of concern, and environmental samples there show cause for remaining concern.  All of our partners in this fight are focusing resources on Pakistan.  Turning the tide will be tough, but we’ve been in tough battles all along in this fight.  While it is easy to become despondent over the recent outbreaks in Pakistan, we need to step back and look at the great work we’ve done overall in this fight.  We know we can win it, and our hard work in promoting the eradication of polio, fundraising at our club and district levels, and our personal commitment to meeting our promise of eliminating polio will assure we ultimately win this fight.

If you haven’t heard, we came through with flying colors last year in our final push for fundraising.  In May, we were considerably short of our $50 million commitment to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, and we faced the prospect of losing millions of dollars in missing the Bill and Melinda Gate Foundation 2:1 matching dollars.  By the end of June, thanks to your efforts, we raised $50.8 million!!!!!!!  I am more grateful than you know for your efforts.  Many districts came through at the last minute with significant donations of District Designated Funds (DDF) which was matched .5:1 by The World Fund in The Rotary Foundation.   This year the match will be even higher.  For 2019-2020, the DDF match from The Rotary Foundation will be 1:1.  For every $1 in DDF, after matching by The Rotary Foundation and the B&MGF, $6 will be applied to the eradication of polio.  This is an incredible opportunity for us to maximize our impact, but it can only be done by application of DDF.  Please advocate for your district to apply at least 20% of its available DDF to the eradication of polio.

For resources to motivate your clubs and districts, Rotary has released new promotional materials on the eradication of polio.  See this link for newly released videos on our efforts:

<https://vimeopro.com/rotary/polioplus-video-resources>

Thank you for all your hard work and support. Ken Robinson, Polio Plus Chair, District 5470