



NEWS RELEASE

Rotary gives US\$40.4 million to end polio worldwide

Rotary funding announcement will be highlighted during its World Polio Day livestream event in New York City featuring top global health experts, UNICEF Executive Director and Grammy winner Angelique Kidjo

NEW YORK, (Oct. 23, 2015) — On the heels of historic success against polio in Nigeria and across the continent of Africa, the global effort to end polio is receiving an additional US\$40.4 million boost from Rotary to support immunization activities and surveillance spearheaded by the [Global Polio Eradication Initiative](#).

Polio is on track to become the second human disease ever to be eliminated from the world (smallpox is the first). To date, Rotary has helped 194 countries stop the transmission of polio through the mass immunization of children. Rotary's new funding commitment, announced in advance of the Oct. 24 observance of World Polio Day 2015, targets countries where children remain at risk of contracting this incurable, but vaccine-preventable, disease.

“We are in the final push to end polio, but as long as the disease exists anywhere in the world, all children are at risk,” said Rotary’s International PolioPlus Committee Chair Michael McGovern. “With just two endemic countries remaining – Pakistan and Afghanistan –we must continue to raise awareness and funds needed to end this paralyzing disease. Our grants show Rotary’s commitment to staying the course until we wipe out polio forever.”

Following Nigeria’s polio-free milestone, and no cases of wild polio in all of Africa in more than a year, Rotary is contributing \$26.8 million to African countries to ensure the disease never returns to the continent: Burkina Faso (\$1.6 million), Cameroon (\$2.7 million), Chad (\$2.6 million), Democratic Republic of Congo (\$499,579), Equatorial Guinea (\$685,000), Kenya (\$750,102), Madagascar (\$562,820), Mali (\$1.5 million), Niger (\$3 million), Nigeria (\$6.9 million), Somalia (\$4.9 million) and South Sudan (\$1.5 million).

Rotary has earmarked \$6.7 million to polio-endemic Pakistan, \$400,000 to Iraq and \$5.3 million to India. The remaining \$990,542 will support immunization activities and surveillance.

Rotary provides grant funding to polio eradication initiative partners UNICEF and the World Health Organization, which work with the governments and Rotary members in polio-affected and high-risk countries to plan and carry out immunization activities.



To date, Rotary has contributed more than \$1.5 billion to fight polio. Through 2018, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will match two-to-one every dollar Rotary commits to polio eradication (up to \$35 million a year). Currently, there have been only 51 cases of polio reported in the world in 2015, down from about 350,000 a year when the initiative launched in 1988.

'End Polio Now: Make History Today' Livestream Event
23 October 2015 - World Polio Day, (6:30 pm EDT) at:

<http://www.endpolio.org/worldpolioday>

Rotary will mark its third annual World Polio Day celebration on Oct. 23 with a livestream event featuring a global status update on the fight to end polio, which will celebrate recent successes against the disease and call upon audiences to help end polio for good. The event – hosted by [Jeffrey Kluger](#), editor at large for TIME magazine and TIME.com and broadcasted live from New York – will feature an array of guest speakers and performers.

- [Angelique Kidjo](#), Grammy Award-winning singer, songwriter and activist from Benin, will perform a song and debut her newest music video dedicated to ending polio.
- [Archie Panjabi](#), Emmy Award winning-actress best known for her role on “The Good Wife,” will chronicle the successful strides Rotary has made in its fight against polio.
- Special online appearances from **Actress Kristen Bell, WWE superstar John Cena and others** will highlight their work spreading awareness about the paralyzing disease.
- [Dr. Jennifer Berman](#), co-host of the Emmy Award-winning television show “The Doctors,” will discuss herd immunity.
- Live remarks by [Anthony Lake](#), executive director of United Nations Children’s Fund, and **Dr. John Vertefeuille**, polio eradication branch chief at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Remarks by Rotary International General Secretary [John Hewko](#) and Rotary International PolioPlus Committee Chair [Michael McGovern](#).

Sponsors US Fund for UNICEF, Global Benefits Group, Spencer Trask & Company, Sanofi Pasteur and Grant Thornton provided generous support to help make this event possible.

About Rotary

[Rotary](#) brings together a global network of volunteer leaders dedicated to tackling the world’s most pressing humanitarian challenges. Rotary connects 1.2 million members of more than 34,000 Rotary clubs in over 200 countries and geographical areas. Their work improves lives at both the local and international levels, from helping families in need in their own communities to working toward a polio-free world. To access broadcast quality video footage and still photos of Rotary members immunizing children against polio available go to: [The Newsmarket](#).

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