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Indian businessman to lead Rotary as its 101st president

Banerjee will target polio eradication as his top priority

(EVANSTON, USA, July 1, 2011) – Kalyan Banerjee, a businessman from Gujarat, India, takes office today as president of Rotary International, www.rotary.org - one of the largest humanitarian service organizations in the world. During his tenure as president until June 30, 2012, Banerjee will lead a global network of 1.2 million business and professional leaders from more than 200 countries and geographical regions who, through volunteer service, help meet the needs of communities worldwide.

Banerjee, a member of Rotary since 1972, and the international organization's third president from India said, "I am honored to lead Rotary as its 101st president." Banerjee added that Rotary's strengths include its ability to attract leaders from different vocations around the world, as well as its role in promoting peace. "My goal is for Rotary to become the preferred organization for today's generation to join and participate in, to make the world better, safer and happier," he said.

As president, Banerjee oversees Rotary's top priority of eradicating polio, a crippling and potentially fatal disease that still threatens children in Africa and Asia – including India. Since 1985, Rotary club members worldwide have contributed more than US\$1 billion and countless volunteer hours to the effort. Rotary is also working to raise an additional \$200 million to fulfill its commitment for a \$355 million challenge grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Great progress has been made, and the incidence of paralytic polio infection has plunged worldwide from 350,000 cases in 1988 to fewer than 1,300 in 2010.

As one of the four remaining polio endemic countries, which also include Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan, India's fight against polio remains strong with the volunteer and financial support from Rotary. In addition, Rotary's sustained political, bureaucratic and religious advocacy efforts at national, state and district levels have made a significant impact on the program in India. To learn more about polio eradication, visit www.rotary.org/endpolio or www.polioeradication.org.

Rotary also sponsors the largest privately funded international scholarship program in the world. Since 1947, Rotary has contributed roughly half a billion dollars to fund a year of study abroad for 38,000 students from 100 countries. These cultural ambassadors use the skills and knowledge they acquire through their time abroad to advance the cause of international understanding, goodwill, and peace. Rotary also sponsors seven Rotary Centers for

International Studies in peace and conflict resolution at eight leading universities in different parts of the world.

Rotary clubs around the world, apart from working to solve individual challenges in development in their communities, have been working on national and zonal initiatives on a multitude of areas including AIDS and blindness prevention, maternal and child health issues, hunger projects, environmental upgradation and other projects.

Banerjee is a director of United Phosphorus Limited, the largest Indian agrochemical manufacturer, and the chair of United Phosphorus (Bangladesh) Limited. He is a member of the Indian Institute of Chemical Engineers and the American Chemical Society, a past president of Vapi Industries Association, and former chair of the Gujarat chapter of the Confederation of Indian Industry. He earned a degree in chemical engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur. Banerjee and his wife, Binota, have two children and four grandchildren.

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