# NEWS RELEASE

**Rotary’s 107th annual convention concludes; setting the record as Korea’s most multicultural, non-profit gathering**

*UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn delivered opening remarks;*

*Rotary committed US$35 million to end polio;*

*Korea gains an estimated US$245 million in tourism revenue;*

*Closing performance by PSY*

**GOYANG CITY, Korea (2 June 2016)**: As Rotary closed its 107th annual international meeting at KINTEX on 1 June, members from 160 countries will bring home indelible memories of Korea and new insights on how to improve lives and bring positive, lasting change to communities around the world.

During his closing speech, Rotary International President K.R. Ravindran recounted his mother’s near fatal battle with polio that occurred when he was a child, and how his grandfather’s Rotary club helped secure a lifesaving ventilator. He then asked Rotary members to “always be mindful that every day and every moment is precious,” and to never “waste an opportunity help people be healthier, happier and better off than they were before.” The session ended with an electrifying performance by K-POP superstar PSY, who is among a roster of public figures and celebrities participating in Rotary’s ‘This Close to ending polio’ public awareness campaign.

As ending polio is Rotary’s top humanitarian priority, Dr. Rebecca Martin, Director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Center for Global Health, delivered an update on the progress of the initiative the previous day. “In the last three decades, we have seen astonishing progress,” said Martin. “Polio cases have declined worldwide by more than 99.9%. The virus is now found in the fewest places ever. We are closer to eradicating polio than we have been at any point in history.” Martin also warned, “Children are still being paralyzed as vaccines are not getting everywhere. Poliovirus knows no borders. We need to stay vigilant.”

In his address at the opening plenary, United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, “Rotarians do remarkable work around the world. Our two organizations have a long and productive history.” He thanked Rotary members for their contributions to eradicating polio and said, “The United Nations is proud to be a partner in ending this debilitating disease.”

Following UN Secretary-General Ban were remarks by Korean Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn and Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe. Other highlights from this week included:

* More than 5,000 Rotary members – dressed in their traditional cultural attire – walking in solidarity for world peace from Seoul City Hall Plaza to Gwanghwamun Square, where a photo exhibit showcased 70 images of Rotary members addressing humanitarian challenges, and highlighted the history of Rotary in Korea.
* A newly renovated children’s library opened in Goyang City with donated illustrated books in multiple languages from Rotary members around the world. The Juyeop Children’s Library serves Korea’s growing ethnic, linguistic and multicultural composition.

Organized by Rotary International in conjunction with the Seoul Host Organization Committee comprised of local Rotary members, and with significant support from the Central Government as well as local governments, the convention brought US$245 million to the local economy and created 1,800 jobs – according to the Korea Tourism Organization.

**About Rotary**

[Rotary](http://www.rotary.org/) 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 35,000 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 go to: [The Newsmarket](http://rotary.thenewsmarket.com/).

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**Contacts**:

Howard Chang (US): +1 847-866-3408, [howard.chang@rotary.org](mailto:howard.chang@rotary.org)

Katie In (Korea): +82 2 2022 8271, [katie.in@edelman.com](mailto:Katie.in@edelman.com)

Kate Yun(Korea): +82 2 2022 8271, [kate.yun@edelman.com](mailto:kate.yun@edelman.com)