



NEWS RELEASE

Rotary announces US\$35 million to support a polio-free world
\$8.15 million will go toward stemming the recent outbreak in Nigeria and countries in the Lake Chad Basin region

EVANSTON, Illinois (20 September 2016) – Rotary today committed an additional \$35 million in grants to support the global effort to end polio, bringing the humanitarian service organization's contribution to \$105 million in 2016.

The announcement follows recent reports of three new cases of wild poliovirus in Nigeria: two cases in July, and one in August. The three cases are the first to be detected in Nigeria since July 2014. With these cases, funding for polio eradication is particularly vital as rapid response plans are now in action in Nigeria and surrounding countries to stop the outbreak quickly and prevent its spread. Rotary and its partners in the [Global Polio Eradication Initiative \(GPEI\)](#) are acting to immunize children in Nigeria and countries in the Lake Chad Basin (Chad, northern Cameroon, southern Niger and the Central African Republic). Nearly one-fourth of the funds Rotary announced today (\$8.15 million) will support the emergency response campaigns in this at-risk region, and last month Rotary provided \$500,000 to immediately assist with the outbreak response.

While significant strides have been made against the paralyzing disease, with just 26 cases reported in 2016, polio remains a threat in hard-to-reach and underserved areas and conflict zones.

"While we are disappointed with the recent news coming out of Nigeria, this situation underscores the extreme importance of widespread immunization campaigns and strong disease surveillance in all countries of the world until polio is fully eradicated," said Michael K. McGovern, chair of Rotary's International PolioPlus Committee. "This funding will help ensure that Rotary and our GPEI partners are doing all that we can to redouble our efforts and protect the progress in polio-free parts of the world, as well as stop transmission in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and now Nigeria."

To sustain this progress, and protect all children from polio, experts say \$1.5 billion is urgently needed. Without full funding and political commitment, this paralyzing disease could return to previously polio-free countries, putting children everywhere at risk. Rotary has contributed more than \$1.6 billion and countless volunteer hours to fight polio. Through 2018, every dollar Rotary commits to polio eradication will be matched two-to-one by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation up to \$35 million a year.

Rotary launched its polio immunization program PolioPlus in 1985, and in 1988 became a spearheading partner in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative with the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and was later joined by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Since the initiative launched, the incidence of polio has plummeted by more than 99.9 percent, from about 350,000 cases a year to 26 confirmed to date in 2016.

In addition to supporting the response in the Lake Chad Basin region, funding has been allocated to support polio eradication efforts in Afghanistan (\$5.55 million), Pakistan (\$12.36 million), India (\$875,000), Somalia (\$1.77 million), South Sudan (\$2.04 million), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (\$2 million). A final grant in the amount of \$2.25 million will support key WHO staff.

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 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](#).

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