

# NEWS RELEASE

**Rotary marks World Polio Day 2014 with US$44.7 million in grants to fight polio in Africa, Asia and the Middle East**

*Humanitarian group’s October 24 livestream event from Chicago features top global health experts, polio-survivor Minda Dentler, pop star Tessanne Chin, reggae’s Ziggy Marley and more*

**EVANSTON, Ill. (Oct. 21, 2014) —** With the world “This Close”—99%—to eliminating polio from the planet, the effort is receiving an additional US$ 44.7 million boost from Rotary to support immunization activities, surveillance, and research spearheaded by the [Global Polio Eradication Initiative](http://www.polioeradication.org/Home.aspx), which aims to end the disabling viral disease worldwide by 2018.

Polio is set to become the second human disease ever to be eliminated from the world (smallpox is the first). To date, Rotary has helped 193 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 2014, targets countries where children remain at risk of contracting this incurable, but totally vaccine-preventable, disease.

“It is fitting that this round of Rotary grants coincides with World Polio Day, which we use to raise awareness of -- and support for – the global campaign to end this terrible disease once and for all,” said Rotary International General Secretary John Hewko, the organization’s top executive. “Rotary is committed to relegating polio to the history books, and we welcome everyone’s support as we move ever closer to our goal of a polio-free world.”

He noted that the end-game strategy against polio includes the introduction of inactivated, injectable polio vaccine to supplement the progress achieved through the immunization of 2.5 billion children with the oral polio vaccine. Leading that effort is Sanofi Pasteur, the largest manufacturer of polio vaccine and co-sponsor with Rotary of a special program in Chicago on World Polio Day.

“As more than 120 countries in the world are introducing the Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV), we are beginning the last chapter on polio eradication,” said Olivier Charmeil, Sanofi Pasteur chief executive officer. “At Sanofi Pasteur, we have had a long-term vision of IPV as the ultimate public health tool able to finish the job started with Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV). Today we are honored to stand alongside Rotary, the historical partner in the battle against polio.”

About $18.5 million will go to the three remaining polio-endemic countries: Afghanistan ($7.4 million) Nigeria ($8.4 million), and Pakistan ($2.7 million). An endemic country is one where the wild poliovirus has never been stopped.

Another $9.5 million is marked for previously polio-free countries currently reporting cases “imported” from the endemic countries: Cameroon ($3.5 million), Ethiopia ($2 million), and Somalia ($4 million).

And $10.4 million will go to polio-free countries that remain at risk of reinfection: Democratic Republic of Congo ($1.5 million), India ($4.9 million), Niger ($1 million), South Sudan ($2 million), and Sudan ($1 million).

The remaining $6.3 million will go toward polio eradication research.

Rotary provides grant funding to polio eradication initiative partners UNICEF and the World Health Organization, which work with the governments and Rotary club members of polio-affected countries to plan and carry out immunization activities. Mass immunizations of children via the oral polio vaccine must continue until global eradication is achieved.

To date, Rotary has contributed more than $1.3 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). As of 2013, there were only 416 confirmed polio cases in the world, down from about 350,000 a year when the initiative launched in 1988.

***‘End Polio Now: Make History Today’* Livestream Event**

**24 October 2014 - World Polio Day, (6:30 pm CT) at:** <http://ow.ly/A7OKy>

For the second year in a row, Rotary will mark World Polio Day with a livestream event featuring a global status update on the fight to end polio as well as an array of guest speakers and performers. Streaming from Chicago, and hosted by TIME magazine science and technology editor **Jeffrey Kluger**, highlights of the event include:

* **Tessanne Chin**, 2013 winner of the TV show “The Voice,” will perform a song during the program, followed by a benefit concert after the event
* **Reggae star Ziggy Marley** will welcome participants to the event and perform via video
* **Minda Dentler**, polio survivor and Ironman competitor, will share her personal storyRemarks via video by [**Olivier Charmeil**](http://en.sanofi.com/investors/corporate_governance/corporate_management/bio_charmeil.aspx)**,** chief executive officer of Sanofi Pasteur and **Bernadette Hendrickx**, Senior Medical and Scientific advisor to the CEO of Sanofi Pasteurwill deliver remarks live.
* Addresses by Rotary International General Secretary **John Hewko,** Rotary Foundation Vice-Chair **Michael McGovern,** and **Dr. James Alexander,** senior medical epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**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. In 1988, Rotary was joined by the WHO, UNICEF and the CDC to launch the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Visit [rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org/) and [endpolio.org](http://www.endpolio.org/) for more about Rotary and its efforts to eradicate polio. Video and still images will be available on the [Rotary Media Center](https://www.rotary.org/en/news-features/media-center).

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