

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

21 January 2009

Dear Fellow Rotarians,



This is another historic day for Rotary. Our organization was honored today to host philanthropist Bill Gates, Jr. at Rotary's International Assembly in San Diego, California, USA.



Speaking to 2009-2010 district governors-elect, Bill Gates, Jr. congratulated Rotarians on the success of the partnership between Rotary International and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to raise funds for polio. To date, Rotarians have already committed more than US\$60 million toward the original US\$100 million Gates challenge grant awarded in November 2007.

In recognizing Rotary's impressive fundraising success and steadfast commitment to polio eradication, Gates announced today that his foundation has decided to increase its challenge grant by US\$255 million – for a total of US\$355 million. By accepting the increase, Rotary also accepts the challenge to raise an additional US\$100 million in matching funds by 30 June 2012 and drives the combined Rotary and Gates Foundation partnership's commitment to a total of US\$555 million.

All of the resulting US\$555 million will be spent in support of immunization activities carried out by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) in polio-affected countries. The initiative is spearheaded by Rotary, the World Health Organization (WHO), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and UNICEF.

In another welcomed development today, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) pledged £100 million (US\$150 million) and the German government is giving an additional €100 million (US\$130 million), both to the GPEI. Contributions from the U.K. and Germany are separate and will not count toward Rotary's match of the Gates Foundation challenge grant.

The infusion of funds is crucial if the world is to finally be rid of polio, a crippling, sometimes fatal disease that poses the highest risk to children. Although the initiative has reduced the number of polio cases by 99 percent over the past two decades, the wild poliovirus still persists in four countries -- Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, and Pakistan -- and imported cases from these endemic countries threaten other developing nations.

Your continued participation in this effort is crucial to making it a success. The Rotary International Board of Directors and the Trustees of The Rotary

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Foundation have unanimously agreed to accept this challenge grant to ensure the success of the PolioPlus program. Rotary and the Gates Foundation intend for their funding partnership to set an example for the rest of the world. We feel confident that this extraordinary partnership will serve as a catalyst for further donations from others to help us realize the dream of a polio-free world.

When Rotary entered the fight against polio in 1985, we promised every child a world free from the threat of polio. We are almost there. This funding agreement between Rotary and the Gates Foundation is a huge step forward, bringing us even closer to our goal. Success is our only option. Together we can *End Polio Now*. For more information, please visit www.rotary.org.

Dong-Kurn Lee
Rotary International, President 2008-09

Jonathan B. Majiyagbe, Chairman
The Rotary Foundation Trustees, RI

Rotary, Gates Foundation announce \$355 million for polio eradication

New challenge grant helps bridge critical funding gap, inspire other donors in global effort to end crippling childhood disease

SAN DIEGO, Calif., U.S.A. (Jan. 21, 2009) -- Rotary International and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have announced they will contribute a combined \$355 million in new funds for polio eradication.

The Gates Foundation is awarding Rotary a \$255 million challenge grant, which Rotary will match with \$100 million raised by its members and supporters over the next three years. As a spearheading partner in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), Rotary's chief role is fundraising, advocacy and mobilizing volunteers. The announcement came during the Rotary International Assembly, the humanitarian service organization's annual leadership conference.

"Rotarians, government leaders and health professionals have made a phenomenal commitment to get us to a point at which polio afflicts only a small number of the world's children," said Bill Gates, co-chair of the Gates Foundation. "However, complete elimination of the polio virus is difficult and will continue to be difficult for a number of years. Rotary in particular has inspired my own personal commitment to get deeply involved in achieving eradication."

In accepting the Gates challenge, Rotary Foundation Chair Jonathan Majiyagbe said the funding partnership will inspire other polio eradication allies, both current and new, to ramp up their support.

"With the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, we are on the brink of eradicating one of the most feared diseases in the world," Majiyagbe said. "This shared commitment of Rotary and the Gates Foundation should encourage governments and nongovernmental organizations to ensure that resources are available to end polio once and for all."

"This partnership of Rotary and the Gates Foundation offers a historic opportunity to rid the world of a disease that robs children of their futures," said RI President Dong Kurn Lee. "It is a significant boost toward making real our dream of a polio-free world."

Rotary will spend the grant money in direct support of immunization activities carried out by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, which is spearheaded by Rotary and its partners, the World Health Organization, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and UNICEF. Rotary will distribute the funds through grants to WHO and UNICEF.

Polio eradication has been Rotary's top priority since 1985, and since then Rotary clubs have raised nearly \$800 million for the effort. Although the initiative has slashed the

number of polio cases by 99 percent, the wild poliovirus still persists in four countries: Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, and Pakistan, and imported cases from those nations threaten to reinfect countries where the virus has been stopped. The initiative currently faces a critical funding shortfall that must be closed if eradication is to be achieved.

This is the second challenge grant Rotary has received from the Gates Foundation for polio eradication. In November 2007, Rotary accepted a \$100 million challenge grant, which Rotary is matching dollar-for-dollar. The two challenge grants represent a combined total of \$555 million in polio eradication funds. Rotary's three-year effort to raise the matching funds for both grants is called Rotary's \$200 Million Challenge. Rotary invites the general public to participate by visiting rotary.org/endpolio to learn about polio eradication and contribute to the challenge match.

Rotary is an international humanitarian service organization with more than 33,000 clubs in about 200 countries and geographical areas. Rotary's 1.2 million members are men and women who are business, professional and community leaders united by a commitment to make the world a better place through volunteer service.