Progress with eradication of Polio – Globally (as at 19 March 2014)

2014 - Good News – But a Focus on Pakistan

Polio-Free Certification of the WHO South-East Asia Region

- 80% of the world’s population is now living in certified polio-free regions (up from 52% in 2013)
- The world's most populous region of 1.8 billion people (classified by the World Health Organisation as the South East Asia Region) was certified polio-free at a ceremony in India recently. WHO Statement.
- The transmission of polio has been interrupted in this bloc of 11 countries stretching from Indonesia to India. This achievement marks a significant leap forward in global eradication.
- Lessons from India’s success are being followed in the 3 remaining endemic countries. But danger is still there. This article and 3 min video explain India’s finally polio-free. Here’s why it matters.
- The figures overseal show the good progress being made except in Pakistan.

The Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) comments the work of the campaign

- After meeting the five core partners of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), the IMB concluded that in the face of great challenge, the partners are clearly determined and seem more cohesive as a group than ever observed before. (IMB letter 26 214). The letter:-
  o commended the GPEI’s comprehensive response to the concerns in IMB’s October 2013 report.
  o called the current situation in Pakistan a powder keg that could ignite widespread outbreaks.
  o said the adequacy of Pakistan’s plans will be in full public view at IMB’s May meeting, and at the subsequent World Health Assembly.
  o expressed concern at the persistent shortfall in funds available to the program.

Pakistan

- Polio Vaccinators (mainly women) continue to risk their lives in Pakistan. Click here. Would you take the risks?
- A top Islamic group slams anti-polio vaccine fatwas and Scholars declare that Shariah allows polio vaccination, and more, it is in fact a duty to protect children; they called for access to them for vaccination Click here, here and here.
- No polio vaccinator had ever set foot in Killi Baksho, near Pakistan’s rugged northwest border with Afghanistan, but a team from a Rotary-supported polio resource centre went to the village expecting an uphill, potentially life-threatening battle to promote acceptance of the vaccine. Their persistence paid off. Immunizations were allowed to begin. Earning community trust
- Watch this short video of Qari Aqeel, an inspiring teacher at a Pakistani madrasa. (Click here. Scroll down to number 3). He explains he has polio because he was not immunised and why he works to combat polio.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) is assessing the benefits of tightening the application of polio vaccination recommendations for travellers from polio-infected areas. Tighter restrictions
- Pakistan and Afghanistan agree on joint anti-polio strategy. Click here

Funding and Advocacy

There are more donations but there is still a funding gap US $ 205 m; Private donation $ 100 m; Rotary $35.9 m

The Worlds Greatest Meal raised $166 which with Bill Gates is half a million - thanks to participating Clubs.

Please watch this short video which makes it clear that “We are this close to ending polio – All we need is you”.

The overriding operational priority now for the GPEI is to ensure all children are reached during supplementary immunization activities during the 2014 ‘low season’ for polio transmission. Polio can be eradicated but we must close the funding gap. So all Rotarians are asked to continue to promote the polio cause.

Rotarians everywhere can also help by telling all our friends with connections to the 3 endemic countries about Polio and our campaign to end it, and asking them to pass the information on to their communities.

At every opportunity: Think polio eradication; Talk polio eradication; Promote polio eradication; and above all Believe in polio eradication.
**Stop Press – Syria, the silent enemy**

Only a few days ago, 27-3-14 there was a moving programme on Radio 4, “Crossing Continents”, explaining how fear and panic is back – because of the war in Syria. Read the preview [BBC News](http://www.bbc.co.uk) and [Listen](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

“In the back of a car parked outside a Turkish hospital, the shy woman in a long pink velvet dress starts sobbing as she talks about her baby, being treated in an isolation ward inside. Muhammad, aged five months, her only son, has just been diagnosed with polio, one of the most contagious and feared diseases of the 20th Century. A global vaccination campaign eradicated it almost everywhere, including in Syria where Muhammad comes from. But now, because of the war there, it's back - sparking panic across the Middle East, and despair in Muhammad’s family.

Syria’s example shows that polio anywhere is a threat to children everywhere. [Anatomy of an outbreak](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

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**New confirmed wild polio virus* cases world-wide as at 25 March 2014.**

- The figures in the table below* are based on information from [GPEI](http://www.polio-erp.org), and start from a global total of 360,000 new cases in 1988.
- **Global position.** In 2012, the number of new cases globally was the lowest EVER. In 2013, although there were more cases because of the outbreaks, the global total was lower than in 2011, but crucially, the number of new cases in endemic countries was the lowest EVER, and only one the three polio viruses remains.
- **Endemic countries.** The decline in the number of new cases in Nigeria shows the benefit of increased immunisation rates and the squeeze on the reservoir areas of the virus. The situation in Afghanistan is now highly dependent on what happens in local areas in the north of Pakistan and cross-border transmission of polio from there: sadly, immunization activities have been suspended by local leaders since June 2012 which creates the major challenge for the campaign.
- **Outbreaks.** As long as polio exists anywhere, outbreaks will occur. Fortunately, the action plans in the Strategic Plan with the increased funding are helping to control the outbreaks that occurred last year, but the implications of the war in Syria and the problems in Pakistan are dire. Furthermore, despite a massive cross-regional response being implemented in the Middle East, a case of polio was reported from Iraq recently, the first since 2000. It is further evidence of the regional spread of the virus from Pakistan via Syria. The six-month old boy from Baghdad had not been immunized, showing why a key phrase in the campaign is to reach every child. His three year old sister also had polio but did not develop symptoms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2013 (cf 2014)</th>
<th>2014 (to date)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Endemic Countries</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>798</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>41</td>
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<td><strong>Non-endemic Countries</strong></td>
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<td>India</td>
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<td>741</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outbreak – Somalia</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outbreak – Kenya</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>Outbreak – Ethiopia</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Chad</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outbreak – Syria</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>Others (incl Iraq)</td>
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<td>130</td>
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<td>177</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Totals</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>1089</td>
<td>1162</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td><strong>Global Totals</strong></td>
<td>1,651</td>
<td>1,604</td>
<td>1,352</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>47</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Figures are provisional pending reviews of possible cases reported recently and do not include the low numbers of circulating vaccine derived Polio cases.

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