



***PolioPlus***

*A programme of The Rotary Foundation that Supports global polio eradication efforts in Polio endemic countries by conducting National Immunisation Days, monitoring poliovirus Transmission and other activities*

**May 2007**

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## **POLIO NEWS IN BRIEF**

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### **POLIO NEWS IN BRIEF IS BACK**

Firstly, I apologise for the length of time that has elapsed since last issuing a Polio News in Brief.

My main reason for this is, because of the current success in this Programme, the news may become repetitive. I have therefore taken the decision to issue Polio News in Brief as a quarterly – the next issue being August, followed by November, February, and then May again.

Mind you, nobody has asked me “where is the monthly Polio News in Brief”!

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But, Foundation’s commitment to polio eradication is still very much Rotary’s priority of the highest order for clubs and district.

Ask a young set of parents in Afghanistan what a life-saving immunisation means to them and their five month old son!! And we Rotarians ourselves are learning the value of service to humanity and the citizens of the earth benefiting, from our service

The contributions to PolioPlus and PolioPlus Partners continue to help the whole Polio programme – long may they continue.

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The world’s success in eradicating polio still heavily depends on four countries – Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, and Pakistan. Monovalent oral polio vaccines, which protect children twice as fast and new laboratory processes that half the time to detect poliovirus, now provide those few countries with the most effective tools ever.

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It has now become of the greatest importance to make strong progress in stopping outbreaks in previously polio free countries. The poliovirus has ability to travel great distances, causing distant importations by either sea-or-air travel. It is very possible, that in the near future, all travellers from any polio-infected area may have to complete full immunisation requirements before travelling.

Saudi Arabia already enforces such policies for all travellers from Nigeria and is indicating plans to enforce similar policies for all travellers from Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan.

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The Global Polio Laboratory Network for the polio network plays a strategic role in efforts to eradicate polio. But, already today 83% of those laboratories assist in rapid diagnosis of a wide range of other vaccine-preventable diseases. The Network also serves as a model for developing broader vaccine-preventable disease

**Mortimer H. (Tim) Raath Chairman PolioPlus Committee**

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laboratory capacity to detect measles, rubella, yellow fever and Japanese encephalitis.

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The G8 Leaders have continued to commit their “support for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative so that the planet can be declared polio-free, within the next few years.

The Russian Federation has recently committed US\$10 million for global eradication activities and Ireland has pledged US\$10.4 million.

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## COUNTRY FOCUS

### Nigeria

In 2007 33 cases have been reported. Nigeria is now engaging religious leaders for polio eradication and an increasing number of children in Quranic Schools are being immunised.

### India

In 2007 27 cases have been reported of which 12 were from Bihar State.

India is conducting SIA's every four weeks in high-risk areas to try to rapidly close the remaining immunity gap in children aged less than two years.

### Afghanistan

No cases reported for 2007.

### Pakistan

In 2007 6 cases have been reported.

### Re-infected Countries

Although no new cases have occurred in the past three months in Bangladesh, Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, and Kenya, areas, such as the Horn of Africa, Niger, and Nepal continue to be at risk with isolated polio importations.

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However, it is now felt that the world has a second and best chance to eradicate polio; almost all outbreaks in re-infected countries, after the international spread 2003/06, have been stopped. Only four countries have never interrupted indigenous wild poliovirus transmission – Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, and Pakistan.

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But, the Programme now has the vaccines which are twice as effective and diagnostic tools that detect and track poliovirus twice as fast as before. The challenge is in reaching every child in Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, and Pakistan.

PolioPlus contributions are needed to help us Rotarians meet this challenge.

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And the recent Council on Legislation overwhelmingly passed a vote to maintain PolioPlus as Rotary's corporate programme of the highest order. ***“Until it is eradicated, we should not select another corporate programme”.***



**Please ask the Foundation Chairman of your Club to circulate this Newsletter to all members.**