



ROTARY
DISTRICT 1130



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

November 2005

POLIO NEWS IN BRIEF

GOAL OF POLIO ERADICATION

As two previously polio-free nations thousands of miles apart (Indonesia and Yemen) coped with polio outbreaks due to imported virus, the World Health Assembly (WHA) re-affirmed its commitment to the eradication of the disease.

Member States commended the notable progress in the endemic areas, proving the feasibility of the approach in high-population countries, resource-poor nations and even countries in/or emerging from conflict. Nigeria had restarted immunisation in 2004 and has already reduced cases by 27% since last year. Neighbouring African countries have made marked improvements in the percentage of children reached with each round of vaccination campaign. India, Pakistan and Afghanistan are gaining ground – the virus circulates in very limited areas – and are on the verge of completing eradication.

In view of the importations of polio into polio-free Yemen and Indonesia, Member States repeatedly noted that these cases proved the need to accelerate the final steps towards the

eradication of the disease. WHO Director-General LEE, Jong-wook, stated in his plenary address: “None of our children are safe until polio is eradicated everywhere. The greatest danger is not these imported cases but the countries from which the virus can continue to spread”.

PROGRESS REPORT

Progress in polio eradication is continuing in spite of the large outbreaks in Yemen and Indonesia - over 1,000 cases of polio have been reported this year. 90% of those cases are occurring in only 3 countries; Yemen (415), Indonesia (219) and Nigeria (325). The remaining 10% are spread in small numbers across 11 countries in Asia and Africa.

While the cases in Indonesia have risen, the government is planning full-scale National Immunisation Days to supplement the emergency mop-ups that took place earlier this year. New importations into Angola and Eritrea will also be quickly targeted with mop-up campaigns and NIDs.

2005 marks the first year in which imported cases outnumber the cases in

Mortimer H. (Tim) Raath Chairman PolioPlus Committee
34 Chaucer Road, London E17 4BE Telephone 020 8527 0488

endemic countries. This highlights the need to fully eradicate the disease in the endemic, reservoir countries so that any future importations can be prevented.

On this front, there has been some good progress in 2005. India is at historic lows in the number of polio cases and has not reported a new case since June. With only 25 cases this year, they are on their way to beating the disease by the end of the year. Pakistan and Afghanistan are also at very low numbers and also have not reported cases since June.

Egypt has not reported a case of polio all year and Niger, despite the shared border with Nigeria, has reported only 2 cases. While Nigeria has reported 325 cases this year, this is more than 100 less than at the same point last year and cases remain largely confined to the north of the country as opposed to a much wider geographic spread in 2004.

Good progress has also been made in some of the countries which suffered imported outbreaks in 2004. Sudan which reported 127 cases last year has only reported 26 this year and only 1 since the early months of the year. The Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso, which were classified as re-established last year, have not reported any cases in 2005.

Importations will continue to occur until polio is eradicated from every country. Past history has repeatedly shown that importations can be overcome although it can take time and extra funding. The key to polio eradication will be to make sure that the endemic countries succeed so that no further importations threaten any child.

PROJECT FOCUS

Nepal is a small country to the north east of India, and remains at a high risk due to its shared border with that country which, in the past, has been a major exporter of the disease.

Chairman Manekshaw has taken the initiative to support this project by making a US\$ 10,000 personal contribution. He seeks the support of his fellow Rotarians around the world to help Nepal remain polio-free.

“Polio eradication will remain the highest priority of Rotary until the historic goal is achieved” (RI President Karl-Wilhelmm Stenhammar).

We, as Rotarians, have already helped the World's Global Polio Eradication Initiative complete 99% of its task.

Let's continue to help achieve that last one per cent.

HAS YOUR CLUB YET MADE ITS CONTRIBUTION THIS YEAR TO DISTRICT FOUNDATION?

Refer next page for extract from The World Health Organisation
www.rotaryinlondon.org

**Mortimer H. (Tim) Raath Chairman PolioPlus Committee
34 Chaucer Road, London E17 4BE Telephone 020 8527 0488**