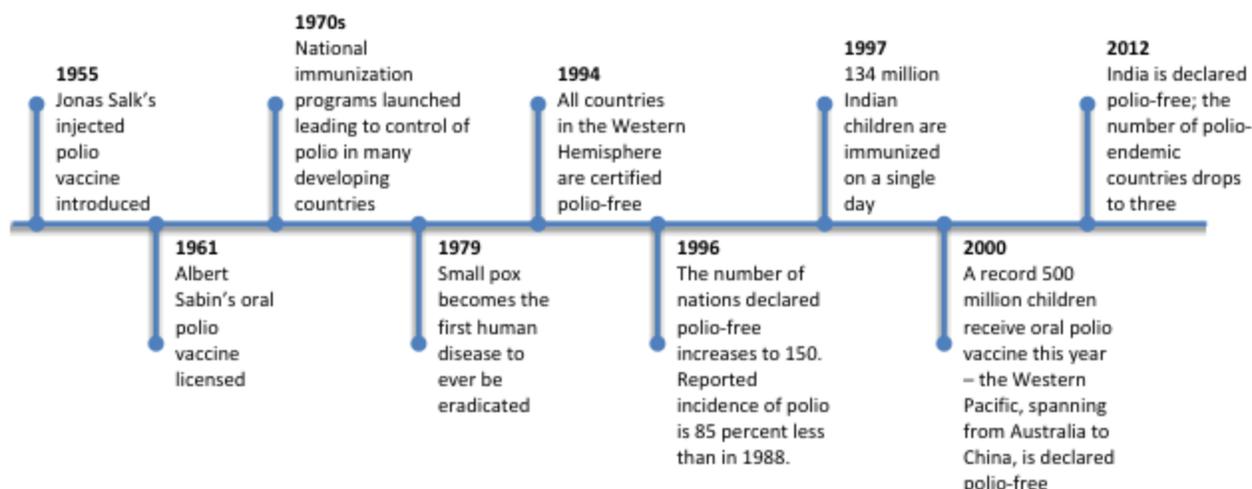


EXECUTIVE BRIEFING FOR HRH ALAWALEED BIN TALAL AL SAUD

Polio, a highly infectious disease that can cause lifelong paralysis and even death, is on the threshold of eradication. The more than 99-percent decline in polio cases since 1988—and the drop from 125 endemic countries to only three today—is a testament to the power of vaccines.

POLIO—A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The development of vaccines that now effectively protect against polio was a major medical breakthrough of the 20th century. Decades of unrelenting effort have reduced infection rates to an all-time low, creating an unprecedented opportunity to eradicate this tragic disease once and for all.



MAJOR SUCCESSES IN THE GLOBAL FIGHT TO ERADICATE POLIO

- The number of polio cases dropped by 99 percent between 1988 to 2000—from 350,000 annual cases to less than 250 in 2012.
- India, long-regarded as the most difficult place to end polio, was declared polio-free in 2012. To ensure that gains are sustained, more than 2 million vaccinators continue to work to protect all of India's 172 million children.
- There are now just three countries that have never eliminated polio: Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nigeria.
- The total number of global polio cases plunged from 650 in 2011 to 218 in 2012.
- Angola, which battled re-infection for seven years, is once again polio-free and the Democratic Republic of Congo also recently re-established its polio-free status.
- New tools and digital advances, coupled with the support of community health workers, have helped to improve vaccine coverage in high-risk areas. As a result, thousands of previously unreachable children are now protected from polio.
- Today, we have the fewest number of cases in the fewest countries ever.

CURRENT STATUS OF POLIO IN THE WORLD

As long as polio continues to circulate anywhere, it threatens children everywhere. India's success is a proof of concept—with adequate financial resources and the right partners, we can eliminate polio from the remaining three endemic countries.

Afghanistan—“Emergency” status with high-level commitment

- Major outbreak in 2011 highlighted significant gaps in supplementary immunization activities (SIAs) and continuing security challenges.
- In September 2012, President Karzai restated his personal commitment and leadership to enhance eradication efforts; immunization days are scheduled for 10-12 February in 14 provinces.
- Afghanistan reduced the number of polio cases by half from 2011 to 2012 and no cases have been reported in 2013.

Pakistan—Unprecedented political commitment

- Improvements in Pakistan’s polio program resulted in two-thirds fewer cases in 2012 as compared to 2011.
- Almost three-quarters of all cases occur in tribal regions and accessibility remains an ongoing challenge.
- Pakistan has successfully engaged political representatives at the highest levels of government to work on polio.

Nigeria—Doubling down to reach more children

- There were 121 cases of wild poliovirus in Nigeria in 2012, more than double the 58 cases in 2011.
- Continuing transmission in Nigeria poses an ongoing risk for reintroduction and outbreaks in polio-free countries and is a major obstacle to achieving global eradication.
- Northern states are the main source of polio infections elsewhere in Nigeria and in neighboring countries.
- Using innovative mapping technologies, teams are working hard to add communities to the immunization campaigns, ensuring children are not left unprotected from polio.
- Additional developments include an increase in field staff and the deployment of female volunteers to engage mothers about vaccine safety.

RECENT CHALLENGES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POLIO

- In December and January, militants targeted and killed a number of health workers in Pakistan, temporarily suspending vaccination campaigns. Catch-up vaccination activities are being conducted to immunize the 1.4 million children who remain unvaccinated as a result of the attacks. Partners, including the government, are committed to continuing the program and increasing efforts to improve the safety of workers.
- Egypt has not had a case of polio since 2004 but polio was recently found in the capital’s sewage, which is believed to have come into the country from Pakistan. A vaccination drive is being planned for late February and health workers are currently canvassing the neighborhoods where the sewage samples were taken, looking for children or adults who may have recently contracted the disease.

KEY PLAYERS WORKING TOWARD POLIO ERADICATION

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) is a public-private partnership led by national governments and spearheaded by the World Health Organization (WHO), Rotary International, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

WHO—UN directing and coordinating authority for health

- Responsible for collection and dissemination of information on strategy implementation and impact
- Leads operational and basic research
- Provides support to ministries of health
- Coordinates human resources for supplementary technical assistance

- Serves as secretariat to certification process
- Facilitates implementation and monitoring of bio containment activities

CDC—U.S. National Health Institute

- Deploys scientists and health experts to GPEI partners
- Provides funding for vaccines, lab, and technical support

Rotary International—World’s largest humanitarian service organization

- Leading private-sector donor to polio eradication
- Advocates to governments and communities
- Provides field-level support in supplementary immunization activities (SIA), implementation, and social mobilization

UNICEF—UN program providing humanitarian assistance to children and families in developing countries

- Lead partner in communications, social mobilization, and procurement and distribution of oral polio vaccine (OPV) for SIA
- Works with partners to strengthen routine immunization, including support for vaccine supply and distribution mechanisms at national and sub-national levels

The Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) assesses progress of the GPEI toward the attainment of a polio-free world

- Independently monitors and guides the progress of the GPEI strategic plan and milestones
- Comprised of global experts from a variety of fields relevant to the work of the GPEI
- Provides assessment of the risks from existing funding gaps
- If the IMB finds that any of the milestones or process indicators are at risk or missed, the relevant national authorities and/or implementing/donor partners are engaged to establish emergency corrective action plans
- Assesses the quality, implementation, and impact of corrective plans at subsequent meetings
- Reports from the board meetings go directly to the heads of the spearheading partner agencies—WHO, Rotary International, CDC, and UNICEF—and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and are made public shortly thereafter

THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION’S ROLE IN POLIO ERADICATION

As the foundation’s number one priority, the polio program benefits from direct oversight by co-chair, Bill Gates. The polio team briefs him monthly on all activities that fall under the foundation’s role as supporter, ambassador, and advocate for the polio eradication program.

	Supporter	Ambassador	Advocate
Definition	Day to day, work in collaboration with GPEI partners to ensure that clear plans are in place and that activities on the ground are successful When challenges arise, consult with partners to identify and implement solutions Provide significant financial resources to GPEI	Advocate with governments in polio-endemic countries to maintain program momentum and sustain commitment to eradication	Secure polio funding commitments from donor governments to ensure that there is adequate cooperation—both financial and political—to reach the 2018 goal
Example	Support WHO technical assistance planning to better reach unvaccinated children in Nigeria	Offer innovative financing options that will give Pakistan the resources needed to reach elimination	Make sure the U.S. government does not reduce funding for polio in next year’s budget