

Dear Colleagues,

Earlier this month, the United Kingdom pledged £100 million in additional funding to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI). As the UK's latest pledge helps us to reach more children with vaccines, the polio program has been simultaneously developing plans to ensure that polio remains gone for good after eradication.

The UK Pledges £100 Million for Polio Eradication Efforts

The UK's announcement of [£100 million](#) in additional support builds on the [US\\$1.2 billion](#) pledged toward polio eradication at the Rotary International Convention in June. These new funds will enable the GPEI to vaccinate an additional 45 million children against polio over the next three years – that's 80 children every minute.

This important commitment continues the UK's long history of leadership in the polio eradication effort. Thanks to the agency's contributions to date, [1.6 million children](#) are walking today who would otherwise be paralyzed. Through its support for routine immunization efforts and outbreak response activities, the UK has provided indispensable support for polio eradication for more than thirty years and counting.

Priti Patel, UK Secretary of State for International Development, announced the pledge, saying “...as long as just one case exists in the world, children everywhere are still at risk. Now it is time for others to step up, follow Britain's lead and make polio history.”

Maintaining a Polio-Free World

While new commitments from the UK and others have brought us closer than ever to ending polio, steps also need to be taken to keeping polio from coming back in the years after the world is certified polio-free. To prepare for this risk, the GPEI – in consultation with global and regional partners, scientific experts, donors and other stakeholders – began developing a plan in 2017 for the first ten years following certification of wild poliovirus eradication. This plan, known as the Post-Certification Strategy (PCS), has three primary goals:

- **Containing polio sources:** Sources of the disease, such as laboratory poliovirus samples, must be securely stored or safely destroyed once polio is eradicated.
- **Protecting populations:** Immunization using the inactivated polio vaccine (IPV), which uses killed poliovirus, must continue for a certain period of time following eradication so that we ensure individuals everywhere remain protected from the disease. Using IPV will minimize the risk of vaccine-derived polio outbreaks.
- **Detecting and responding to outbreaks:** High-quality surveillance and adequate vaccine supplies must remain in place so that any outbreaks can be quickly identified and stopped.



A child in Nigeria receives the oral polio vaccine. ©UNICEF/Thomas Moran

The Polio Oversight Board will review the PCS at their meeting in early 2018, and the final plan will be presented to the World Health Assembly in May 2018. More information on the PCS can be found [here](#).

With the generosity of donors pushing us closer and closer to eradication, and plans being put in place to secure this status once achieved, the world is now closer than ever to becoming – and remaining – polio-free.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping, sweeping strokes that form a cursive name.

Chris Elias
President, Global Development, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Chairman, Polio Oversight Board