



National Polio Plus Committee: PDG Tunji Funsho - Chairman, PDG Yomi Adewunmi - Vice Chairman, PDG Charles Femi Lawani - Vice Chairman, PDG Kazeem Mustapha - Vice Chairman, PAG Yakubu Ndanusa - Vice Chairman, PDG Obafunso Ogunkeye - Secretary, PAG Remi Bello - Treasurer, PDG Joshua Hassan - PR Adviser, PDG Tolu Omatsola, PDG Ijeoma Okoro, - Representing CRODIGON, RIVP Yinka Babalola - Special Representative, DG Jide Akeredolu, DG Victor Onukwugha, DG Nze Aninzor, DG Sam Uko

Chairman's Address

Second milestone- certification- Room for optimism

As we continue to savour the satisfaction of crossing the three years without a case of wild polio virus in Nigeria mark there is still that lingering anxiety of meeting all the requirements for certification. As I write the African regional certification committee (ARCC) are travelling across the country meeting with health officials at the very top, interviewing health workers, perusing essential documents relating to routine immunisation, vaccine stocks and storage, surveillance records, record keeping and a host of other indices to determine if we are truly out of the woods as regards the wild polio virus. These are genuine concerns in view of the current spate of vaccine derived polio rearing its head across many African countries and Asia. However, the recent conclusion of the 37th ERC (Expert Review Committee) meeting gives consolation of the non-likelihood of the wild polio virus lurking somewhere in the country undetected. I will like to share the heart-warming conclusion of the ERC regarding the subject of the probability of the wild polio virus coming back to Nigeria. I reproduce it in full below:

The circulation of WPV1 in Borno State and Nigeria as a whole is increasingly unlikely because:

- Its been 38 months since the last WPV in September 2016 from Borno State;
- From 2018 to 2019, 4 cVDPV2 have been detected

from AFP cases, 2 from contacts and 1 from a healthy child in inaccessible areas of Magumeri, Nganzai and Konduga as well as an aVDPV2 from Mobbar;

- Wide scale environmental sampling (113 environmental sampling sites) is ongoing in 29 states + FCT: 0 WPV, 100 cVDPV2 & 30 aVDPV2 detected;

- Multiple innovations implemented in Borno and other States;

- Surveillance reach is presently greater than vaccination reach in Borno State;

- The community surveillance network serves as a link between inaccessible and accessible areas and has detected more than 272 AFP cases between 02/2018 – 11/2019;

- Indirect methods/strategies like healthy children sampling (HSC), systematic contact sampling (SCS) as well as environmental sampling Sweep have not detected any WPV. One cVDPV2 and one aVDPV2 yet to be classified were detected using HCS and SCS respectively

- Almost 100,000 stool samples have been analysed between October 2016 – October 2019 without WPV;

- There is marked improvement in surveillance quality with significant reduction in compatibles,



DR. TUNJI FUNSHO
Chairman NNPPC

However, the above presupposes that we don't let down our guards and maintain and even improve on the structures that got us here. We must put a lid on the current outbreaks of vaccine derived polio virus by increasing the level of our routine immunisation coverage. We at Nigeria National PolioPlus Committee continue to advocate to State Governors to put more emphasis on polio eradication with overt political support and providing the necessary funding to ensure that we keep polio at zero in Nigeria.

*We wish you
a very
Merry Christmas
and a Happy
and Prosperous
New Year with
Zero cases
of polio*

FROM EDITOR'S DESK

IT'S HALF-FULL

The question of whether the glass is actually half-full or half-empty is an eternal philosophical question that is destined never to be fully or completely answered for everyone. So, at the end of the day, each individual assumes an answer and takes a position that they are comfortable with. At Rotary, the year doesn't end for us in December but because we lead efforts to eradicate polio, December is often a time when we pause for reflection and take stock of our achievements in the Gregorian calendar year that has come to an end. It's a time of the year where we sometimes attempt to answer the question of the glass being half full or half-empty, take stock and plan ahead for the second half of the Rotary year. You will therefore notice a little bit of that in this edition of PolioStop.

Looking back at 2019, I see a lot of reason to be unhappy. One reason is that despite our best efforts, we have not been able to put an end to polio transmissions on a global level. If the truth is to be told, we have actually regressed. In 2018, we were really sad to have 33 wild poliovirus cases in Pakistan and Afghanistan but in 2019, we have more than tripled

that number. As at the first week of December, 113 cases of the wild poliovirus had been recorded. Think about that. 113 children paralyzed, crippled and maimed for life. This is in addition to 195 cases of circulating vaccine derived poliovirus recorded in 2019, an upsurge from a total of 104 cases in 2018. In a way, we had expected that the last mile of the marathon would be the toughest and hardest so these developments are not unexpected but they are quite devastating because the tail seems to have grown so large that it has now begun to wag the dog. It suggests that our glass may actually be half-empty and prompts us to introspection on what we have done wrong.

I however choose to see the glass as half-full. Despite the setbacks we have had, 2019 has also been a year of remarkable achievements, particularly in Nigeria. From January till December 2019, Rotary PolioPlus has been fully occupied in different engagements that have meant that we have been super busy. From hosting important international delegations to conferences and workshops and from one major advocacy or

fundraising activity to another, 2019 has actually been super full. Significantly, August 2019 also marked the achievement of a major milestone in the effort to eradicate polio- we went 3 full years without a case of the wild poliovirus! That was a wow moment for everyone in the Nigerian programme. It had taken a lot of effort and significant sacrifice in blood and sweat but we got there. Imagine that just 7 years ago, we were the pariah of the polio eradication world with 122 cases and since that time, we have actually had 5 years with zero incidence of polio. That gives me confidence that Pakistan and Afghanistan will soon join Nigeria in reporting zero polio. Nigeria has done it. Pakistan and Afghanistan can do it too.

So, in considering a pretty busy Rotary year that is only half-done, I think we have reasons to count our blessings and be thankful. Here's on to the next Rotary half-year and to 2020, a year in which I am optimistic that we will finally see the end of polio. I choose to be a cup half-full kind of guy. It is what I need to be focused to see the rest of the job through. I remain confident in Rotary's promise to gift the next generation a world that is polio-free.

STATES WITH OUTSTANDING DECEMBER SIA TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN JANUARY 2020

11 th – 14 th Jan. 2020	-----	Katsina State
11 th – 14 th Jan. 2020	-----	Kano State
11 th -14 th Jan. 2020	-----	Delta State
11 th -14 th Jan. 2020	-----	Edo State

PROPOSED EXPANSION OF 2020 SIA

S/No	Month	Dates	Scope
1	Feb 2020	29 Feb – 3 Mar	NID
2	April 2020	TBC	14 HR States
3	Q4 2020	TBC	11 HR states



ROTN. OLUGBENGA OLAYIWOLE
Editor PolioStop

NIGERIA POLIO UPDATE: NOVEMBER 2019

NIGERIA AND GLOBAL POLIOVIRUS UPDATE

Nigeria has gone over 38 months since the last Wild poliovirus case was detected in August 2016 from Borno State. However the country is in the midst of four separate outbreaks of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) involving both AFP cases and positive environmental isolates reported in both 2018 and 2019. Two genetically distinct outbreaks are centered in Sokoto state with two additional, separate outbreaks originating in Jigawa state and Bauchi state. The cVDPV2 originating in Jigawa has spread both within Nigeria, and internationally to the Republic of Niger and Cameroon. There are 18 cVDPV2 cases reported in 2019 so far as against the 34 cVDPV2 cases reported in 2018.

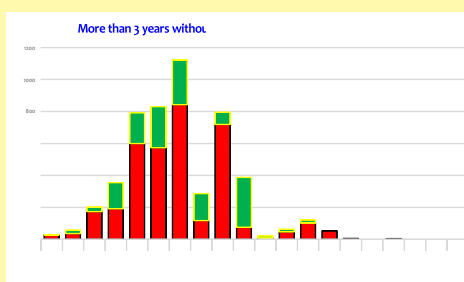
The Expert Review Committee (ERC) on Polio Eradication recently congratulated Nigeria on the achievement of 3 years without the detection of cases of the wild poliovirus (WPV). Having achieved this milestone, the Africa Region Commission for Polio Eradication Certification will start conducting field verification and reviewing documentation of interruption of wild poliovirus towards possible certification of the Africa Region.

The Global Summary WPV 1 in 2019 stands at 113 after closing 2018 with 33 cases while CVDPV2 in 2019 is so far 177 compared to 104 in 2018.

Four cases of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) were reported this week; one each from Natitingou in Atacora province, Parakou in Borgou province, Bante in Collines and Djougou in Donga province in the Republic of Benin. The onsets of paralysis were between 21 September and 15

October 2019. Four cases of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) were reported this week: one each from Savelugu in Northern province, Sunyani Municipal in Bono province, Nkwanta South Municipal in Oti province and Gonja central in Savannah province in Ghana. The onsets of paralysis were between 8 and 23 October 2019. There are now nine cVDPV2 cases in 2019 linked to the Jigawa outbreak in Nigeria. The risk of further cVDPV2 spread across West Africa remains high.

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative is focused on strengthening surveillance to find and respond to the virus wherever it emerges, and closing immunity gaps to protect the population and stop the virus from circulating. The programme is also committed to advocating for sustained political commitment and ensuring necessary financial resources and technical support for polio eradication at all levels.



AMINU MUHAMMAD
NATIONAL PROGRAMME COORDINATOR

REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN NORTHERN TRADITIONAL LEADERS COMMITTEE ON PHC DELIVERY (NTLC), HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS, ALH. KYARI IBN UMAR EL-KANEMI, (CON) EMIR OF BAMA, AT SECOND QUARTER NTLC MEETING HELD AT KADUNA ON THE 27TH NOVEMBER 2019.



Earlier this year, in August, the country recorded a historic milestone of 3 years without a case of the wild poliovirus. This feat was not achieved overnight but through our combined efforts in areas of planning, community mobilization, sensitization, advocacy, monitoring, and supervision, as well as the commitment of the government, especially the polio team at the national, state, LGA, wards and settlements levels.

The journey has been turbulent but with our partnership, commitment, and sacrifice, we have come this far in the polio program, the clock is ticking as the race towards certification is near, may I remind us that our work is not done yet, it is not time to celebrate but a time to renew our efforts and mobilize our communities to continue to accept the lifesaving oral polio vaccine and ensure that all children under the age of 1 year complete their routine immunization schedule while also ensuring that our women seek antenatal services and adopt health-seeking behaviors.

I want to assure the government, through the NPHCDA Board Chairman, the Executive Director and everyone here today that, the traditional institution will continue to be resilient in our efforts as the last lap is usually the hardest in any race. We will continue to provide support in all capacity to ensure we reach our goal of being a polio-free country.

As usual, please let's be very frank in our discussions, let's be open with whatever challenges are hindering our effective implementation of the framework in our domains so that we can collectively agree on the next steps and roll-out plans with the technical guidance of NPHCDA & partners. Once again I thank you all and I wish us all fruitful deliberations.

Source: NEOC

Polio Eradication - Nigeria Hopeful As Certification Process Begins



Polio experts have said if Nigeria sustains its current trend of not detecting or reporting any new case of wild polio virus, Nigeria and Africa at large should be certified polio free before the end of 2020.

This was disclosed by the Coordinator, Polio Eradication Programme at the World Health Organization (WHO) Africa Regional Office, Pascal Mkanda. Speaking during the 37th session of Expert Review Committee (ERC) on Polio Eradication and Routine Immunisation (RI) in Nigeria.

He said the African Regional Certification Commission (ARCC) for Polio Eradication certification will start conducting field verification and reviewing documentation of interruption of wild polio virus (WPV) soon.

He said if the ARCC is satisfied with the national documentation and field verification, the WHO African Region could be certified to have eradicated WPV by mid-2020.

The ERC meets periodically to evaluate the progress made in ensuring a polio-free Nigeria.

The monitoring body also provides guidance to the government and development partners on best practices in routine immunisation in Nigeria.

The 37th ERC members who converged to deliberate on key decisions concerning polio eradication and routine immunisation

in Nigeria identified critical gaps that should be bridged to maintain the present status towards polio certification.

Mr Mkanda, on behalf of ERC members, acknowledged the work done by the programme, especially by the frontline workers who continually work in very challenging situations.

"If Nigeria gets it right, Africa could be certified Polio-free soon," he said.

He, however, cautioned Nigeria to focus more attention on stopping the transmission of all types of polio viruses.

Nigeria had almost achieved the feat of interrupting the transmission of polio earlier but recorded a setback in 2016.

However, since August 2016, the country has not recorded any new case of the virus. It is hopeful that the situation remains by March 2020, Nigeria may be certified polio-free.

The new cause for concern, however, is sporadic outbreaks circulating vaccine- derived poliovirus (cVDPV) circulating in some countries in Africa. Currently, 12 African countries in the WHO African Region, namely: Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, Togo and Zambia are experiencing the outbreak.

Vaccine-derived polioviruses are rare, but these viruses are sometimes found in severely under-immunised populations living in areas with inadequate sanitation.

Meanwhile, Mr Mkanda said it is important that the Nigerian government and partners avoid any complacency that could jeopardise Nigeria's removal from the list of

polio-endemic countries and certification of wild polio virus interruption for the African Region.

While the ERC concurs with the Nigeria Programme that the transmission of WPV1 is unlikely, experts are calling on government to intensify its efforts at reaching children in inaccessible areas with vaccines.

They said Nigeria needs to put in mind that the resurgence of the wild polio virus reported in 2016 was largely due to insecurity in the North-east and a waning political commitment.

They agreed that sustaining the success is hinged on systematic processes focused on reaching children in inaccessible areas, providing timely and adequate resources as well as strengthening routine immunization

The ERC also raised concerns on the issues of non-compliance in some communities in Northern Nigeria, especially in Sokoto state.

ERC recommended that the programme should fast track the roll-out of key messages, including engaging journalists to create awareness and to address the circulating Vaccine Derived Polio Virus (cVDPV2) transmission in the context of zero WPV1 status in the country.

The ERC recommended that the programme continues the engagement of traditional, religious and community leaders to sustain the gains on immunisation.

Before departing Nigeria, the ERC members also informed the Minister of Health, Osagie Ehanire, of their observations and recommendations

By Ayodamola Owoseye for allafrica.com

Nigeria on course to win fight against polio-NPHCDA



Nigeria's National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) on Tuesday said the country is on course to win the fight against polio in the shortest possible time.

At a summit in Abuja to review the routine immunization against polio in Nigeria, the agency said three years and counting without the wild polio virus in the most populous African country was nothing short of a milestone.

"The march toward a polio-free Nigeria has begun. However, there's a need for health workers to access insecure areas in Borno and some parts of the northeast region," said Faisal Shuaib, head of the NPHCDA.

Experts attending the two-day summit in Abuja are expected to review Nigeria's efforts toward polio eradication and identify gaps.

According to Shuaib, progress has been recorded on reaching inaccessible children, sustaining communication and social mobilization, strengthening routine immunization and vaccine management and accountability.

"Together, we can finish the job of flushing polio out of the country," the official said, further expressing the optimism that Nigeria will soon obtain a polio eradication certificate.

He said health officials in the country had worked tirelessly with a very strong surveillance system.

As recently as 2012, Nigeria had accounted for more than half of all polio cases worldwide, according to the World Health Organization.

Nigeria's last polio case was recorded in August 2016, making it the last country in Africa to record wild polio virus infections.

Culled from Africa.cgtn.com

APPLYING A GENDER LENS TO NIGERIA'S SURVEILLANCE NETWORK

Gender-disaggregated data drives progress in Nigeria's polio eradication programme.



WHO medical officer Dr Aisha Alhassan conducts an acute flaccid paralysis examination in Jere Local Government Area, Borno State. ©WHO/Nigeria

In Jere Local Government Area, in Borno State, Nigeria, a team of male surveillance officers have been dispatched to look for the poliovirus.

They make a first stop at the home of HajiyaLiman Bello, a mother of three and a housewife.

"Who are all of you and what do you want?" Hajiya asks.

"We are health workers please. We need to collect stool samples from your children as there has been a case of Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) in this area", they reply.

Hajiya isn't comfortable with the idea of a male health worker handling stool sample collection for her children. She requests that surveillance officers return with a female colleague if they wish to go ahead.

Recognising the links between gender and disease surveillance

In line with the Global Polio Eradication Initiative's gender strategy, Nigeria's polio programme has been quantifying the gender aspect of its work. While women make up 95% of frontline workers delivering polio vaccines, a 2017 study conducted by the World Health Organization found there were significantly more men than women engaged in polio surveillance activities in Nigeria.

In 2016 there were 29 men employed in Nigeria as state epidemiologists compared with just eight women doing the same job; 23 male state disease surveillance and notification officers (DSNOs) compared with 14 women, and at a Local Government level, 609 male DSNOs versus 218 female.

The results of the study prompted reflection by programme staff. Gender, like other factors such as age, education and socioeconomic status, is an important determinant of health-seeking behaviour and outcomes. In the case of disease surveillance officers, gender

diversity amongst personnel helps the programme build trust and acceptance amongst parents.

"I believe gender strongly influences disease surveillance and access to immunization services," says Dr KabirYusuof, a health worker who has worked with the Nigerian Government polio programme for over ten years.



Dr Alhassan explains the key signs of acute flaccid paralysis to a pharmacist in Borno State. ©WHO/Nigeria

"Nigeria is generally a culturally attuned country. There are some communities where men only feel comfortable with female health workers, especially when it comes to house-to-house outreach and matters of maternal health. For this reason, I believe the role of women in both polio surveillance and response cannot be overlooked."

Surprisingly, the report showed there were more men than women working as surveillance focal points in health facilities in northern zones of Nigeria, compared to the south. Using gender-disaggregated data helped the programme see where things need to change.

"WHO advocates for breaking...illusions that women cannot 'fit in' when it comes to disease surveillance practice," says Dr Fiona Braka, Team Lead for the Expanded Programme on Immunization at WHO Nigeria.

Polio eradication was the first disease programme at the World Health Organization to develop a dedicated gender strategy. The Nigeria AFP surveillance gender study had never been done before and has helped lay the groundwork for further examination of the programme through a gender lens. The authors of the study found that the number of AFP cases detected in boys and girls was similar, as were polio vaccination rates.

Dr Braka observes, "Integrating or mainstreaming gender into all facets of socio-economic life is key to tackling gender inequalities."

culled from: www.polioeradication.org

Rotarians Never Leave the Job Incomplete

AZIZ MEMON, Chair, Pakistan NPPC



"Tears were rolling down her cheeks. She was a true embodiment of pain and fatigue. She had huddled to her chest an eleven-year-old boy whose thin legs were hanging down, hampering her while she walked. I was stunned by the scene and stopped. I was curious to ask the woman what had happened to the child she was carrying. The poor woman wiped her tears to reply to me and revealed that out of her six children, three were suffering polio paralysis."

Aziz Memon is narrating his first encounter with a child suffering from polio. The experience proved life-changing. Over 22 years, he has risen to become one of the most influential philanthropists working to end polio in Pakistan.

Aziz Memon is a good person to speak to if you want to get an insight into Rotary's work in Pakistan. Chair of the Pakistan National PolioPlus Committee, Aziz is also a member of the International PolioPlus Committee. He has won multiple awards for his work to defeat the virus, and in October was announced as the first incoming Rotary Foundation Trustee to be appointed from Pakistan.

Aziz is most proud of his national committee's work. He explains, "The committee has funded over 200,000 vaccine carriers for the entire EPI programme in Pakistan."

"We have also supported vaccination at borders through permanent transit points, improved routine immunization at Permanent Immunization Centers, and helped provide basic medical care through female health workers. We have improved quality of life for families through solar filtration plants to provide clean water and have educated illiterate communities through providing speaking books. Rotarians create advocacy in schools, colleges, with Ulemas [Islamic religious scholars] and in their communities."

With the support of Aziz and others, Rotary International has contributed millions of dollars to eradicate polio in Pakistan through the Government, WHO and UNICEF.

The global drive to root out polio has some way to go still, with the poliovirus remaining in Afghanistan and Pakistan. To break the impasse an intensive, innovative and persistent effort is required.

"Rotary International's mission to eradicate polio globally is our top priority and Rotary has taken this mission forward and helped and supported governments in other polio endemic countries to eradicate this terrible disease. It will be a privilege to be part of history when polio is eradicated, the second disease to be wiped out after smallpox," Aziz explains.

Aziz reiterates that vaccine hesitancy and misinformation are two of the remaining challenges in the fight against polio in Pakistan.

"Misinformation spread through social media creates fear of the polio vaccine. Some security concerns still persist in tribal areas and there is weak accountability in places."

In response, Rotary is supporting innovative strategies to address the challenges related to vaccine hesitancy. Aziz says, "Hesitancies must be skillfully addressed. We are working with Ulemas and religious scholars in all four provinces to create a positive image. Social media is playing a very strong role in averting misconceptions."

Rotary is also a critical support to polio survivors who cannot afford their medical expenses. Aziz explains, "Rotary funds WHO to support a rehabilitation programme for polio victims. The Rotary Club of Karachi also sponsors a community project called the Artificial Limb Center which provided prosthesis, calipers, crutches and wheelchair for polio victims and amputees as well as those injured in accidents."

Polio eradication in Pakistan has been a long journey but Aziz is motivated to overcome the remaining challenges.

"I motivate my fellows by nominating them for the Polio Free Service awards; publicizing their projects and activities in the monthly PolioPlus newsletter and honoring their services during the annual District Conference."

A polio-free country is a dream for Pakistan. Reflecting on his feelings when India ended polio, to the joy of Rotarians worldwide, Aziz says, "It was good to know that a country like India could eradicate polio. It gives us hope that Pakistan can do it too, and we will soon be polio free."

"Rotary was there at the beginning of the global effort to eradicate polio. If we stop now, polio may bounce back. We've done too much: we've made too much progress to walk away before we finish."

Culled from polioeradication.org

Global Leaders Pledge \$ 2.6 Billion to Eradicate Polio at the Reaching The Last Mile Forum



Global leaders convened at the Reaching the Last Mile (RLM) Forum in Abu Dhabi to affirm their commitment to eradicate polio and pledge US\$2.6 billion as part of the first phase of the funding needed to implement the Global Polio Eradication Initiative's Polio Endgame Strategy 2019-2023.

This pledging event comes on the heels of a major announcement last month that the world has eradicated two of the three wild poliovirus strains, leaving only wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) still in circulation. Additionally, Nigeria – the last country in Africa to have cases of wild polio – has not seen wild polio since 2016 and the entire WHO African region could be certified wild polio-free in 2020. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of health workers, governments, donors and partners, wild polio only circulates in two countries: Pakistan and Afghanistan. “From supporting one of the world's largest health workforces, to reaching every last child with vaccines, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative is not only moving us closer to a polio-free world, it's also building essential health infrastructure to address a range of other health needs,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization and Chair of the Polio Oversight Board. “We are grateful for the generous pledges made today and thank governments, donors and partners for standing with us. In particular, I would like to thank His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of

Abu Dhabi for hosting the GPEI pledging moment and for his long-term support for polio eradication.”

The commitments announced today come at a critical time for the polio eradication effort. Barriers to reaching every child – including inconsistent campaign quality, insecurity, conflict, massive mobile populations, and, in some instances, parental refusal to the vaccine – have led to ongoing transmission of the wild poliovirus in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Further, low immunity to the virus in parts of Africa and Asia where not all children are vaccinated has sparked outbreaks of a rare form of the virus. To surmount these obstacles and protect 450 million children from polio every year, governments and donors announced significant new financial commitments toward the \$3.27 billion needed to support the Polio Endgame Strategy.

Pledges are from a diverse array of donors, including: US\$160 million from the host of the pledging moment His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi; countries, including US\$215.92 million from the United States, US\$160 million from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, US\$105.05 million from Germany, US\$84.17 million from the Federal Government of Nigeria, US\$10.83 million from Norway, US\$10.29 million from Australia, US\$7.4 million from Japan, US\$2.22 million from Luxembourg, US\$1.34 million from New Zealand, US\$116,000 from Spain, and US\$10,000 from Liechtenstein; GPEI partners, including US\$1.08 billion from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and US\$150 million from Rotary International; philanthropic organizations, including US\$50 million from Bloomberg Philanthropies, US\$25 million from Dalio Philanthropies, US\$15 million from the Tahir Foundation, US\$6.4 million from the United Nations Foundation, US\$2 million from

Alwaleed Philanthropies, US\$1 million from the Charina Endowment Fund, and US\$1 million from Ningxia Yanbao Charity Foundation; and the private sector, including US\$1 million from Ahmed Al Abdulla Group, US\$1 million from Al Ansari Exchange, and US\$340,000 from Kasta Technologies. Earlier this month, the United Kingdom announced it would contribute up to US\$514.8 million to the GPEI.

“We are proud to host the GPEI pledging moment in Abu Dhabi and thank all the attendees for their continued commitment to the eradication of polio,” said Her Excellency Reem Al Hashimy, UAE Cabinet Member and Minister of State for International Cooperation. “Since launching in 2014, the Emirates Polio Campaign has delivered more than 430 million polio vaccines in some of the most remote areas of Pakistan. We remain firm in our mission to reach every last child and believe together we can consign polio to the pages of history.”

In addition to overcoming barriers to reach every child, this funding will ensure the resources and infrastructure built by the GPEI can support other health needs today and in the future. Polio workers deliver Vitamin A supplements, provide other vaccines like those for measles and yellow fever, counsel new mothers on breastfeeding, and strengthen disease surveillance systems to anticipate and respond to outbreaks. As part of its commitment to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, the GPEI is also working to ensure equal participation of women at all levels of the programme.

The future of polio eradication hinges on support and engagement at all levels of the programme – from individuals to communities to local and national governments to donors. If the strategies needed to reach and vaccinate children are fully implemented and funded, we are confident that we can deliver a world where no child lives in fear of polio.

Culled from polioeradication.org

Polio worker kidnapped for her role saving lives of Nigerian children honoured



A polio vaccine worker from northern Nigeria who was kidnapped and held for two weeks by bandits because of her work fighting the disease has been honoured.

Rahane Lawal was given an Unsung Hero award for her work in encouraging women to have their children vaccinated.

And, despite being targeted by the criminal gang who thought she was earning large sums of money, she has returned to her role talking to women and families about their health.

Nigeria recently marked three years without a single case of polio, an important milestone on the road to complete eradication for both the country and the entire continent.

Ms Lawal, who was given her honour at the Reaching the Last Mile Forum in Abu Dhabi agreed to become a community organiser as she had seen the benefit of vaccines in keeping her own 10 children healthy.

“When Unicef came looking for volunteers to go out into the community and talk about vaccines I was keen to do it,” she told the Telegraph.

“My own children are healthy because of vaccines,” she said.

Ms Lawal does not receive payment for her role - just enough to cover expenses and costs. However, she was targeted because gunmen assumed she was a well-paid member of Unicef staff.

The bandits came to her family compound at around 2am one night in October last year, woke everyone up and demanded money.

They tied up her husband and took him to another room while they put a gun to the head of her daughter. When her father-in-law pleaded with them to spare them he was gunned down and killed.

Ms Lawal lives in a simple family compound and cannot afford to educate her children beyond primary school level.

“I said to them that we didn't have anything - I told them they could see where I live. How am I rich?” she says.

They took Ms Lawal, put her on a motorbike and fled with her into the forest. Ms Lawal told her story in the plush surroundings of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, an outpost of the grand French museum and art gallery - a

setting completely at odds with her tragic tale. She wept as she spoke and constantly played with a tissue.

Ms Lawal was held for two weeks while the gunmen attempted to get 20 million naira - just over £55,000 - from her family, an unimaginable sum for her and her family.

She was eventually released but her family have now fled the area and her children, some of whom witnessed the horror of that night, have flashbacks and jump at loud noises.

But despite her ordeal, during which she received regular beatings with the butt of a gun Ms Lawal continues her work for Unicef in her new village.

“When I felt better again I wanted to go back out there and help my community. The award is important to me because it shows that what I'm doing is important and taken seriously,” she said.

Dr Maha Barakat, advisor to the Abu Dhabi government, said that she and her fellow judges wanted to honour someone who had given the most sacrifice.

She said that workers such as Ms Lawal and her fellow award nominees were helping to rid the world of disease.

“Many of them work under difficult conditions, quite often in areas of conflict and sometimes they're attacked,” she said.

“The work that local health workers do is not just locally relevant but regionally, nationally and globally relevant too. We will not succeed in eradicating polio from the world without their help,” she said.

From the reporting of Anne Gulland for telegraph.co.uk

Rotary PolioPlus Providing Clean Water in Nigeria

When we talk about PolioPlus, it's clear to all that we are about the eradication of polio but how many really realize the added benefits that the programme brings? The "plus" in PolioPlus is the "extra" that we bring as part of the polio eradication campaign. It might be a hand-operated tricycle or access to water. It might be additional medical treatment, bed nets, or soap.

Many communities in Nigeria have a critical need for clean water to improve overall health. This will also help prevent the spread of the poliovirus. In line with the new Endgame Strategy, the PolioPlus programme is proactively providing potable water to vulnerable communities in areas at high risk of the disease.

Addressing a critical long-term need such as access to clean water helps build relationships and trust with community members. Within camps for displaced people in northern Nigeria, the polio vaccinators who regularly visit communities are sometimes met with frustration.

Supplying clean water to vulnerable communities is a priority of Rotary's PolioPlus programme not only in Nigeria, but also in Afghanistan and Pakistan — the only other remaining polio-endemic nations, where transmission of the virus has never been interrupted.

Giving water is noble work also," says Aziz Memon, chair of Rotary's Pakistan Polio-Plus Committee.

Access to safe drinking water is also an important aspect of the The Polio Endgame Strategy 2019-2023, which aims to "ensure populations reached for polio campaigns are also able to access much-needed basic services, such as clean water, sanitation, and nutrition." The poliovirus spreads through human waste, so making sure people aren't drinking or bathing in contaminated water is critical to eradicating the disease.



Solar borehole in RUBY community, Jalingo, Adamawa



Solar borehole in Umuelem community, Enugu State

"People say, 'We don't have water, and you're giving us polio drops,'" Chairman Nigerian National Polio Plus Committee Dr Tunji Funsho explains. Rotary and its partners have therefore intervened by providing funds for 31 solar-powered boreholes in order to ensure that clean water is provided to many communities with a critical need in northern Nigeria and other parts of the country, and the effort is ongoing.



Solar borehole in APETE community, Oyo state

Source: GPEI Partners

ROTARIANS AND GUESTS AT THE KEEP POLIO@ZERO CONCERT RED CARPET





KEEP POLIO@ZERO CONCERT



TIMAYA (left) and PHYNO performing at the concert



Polio Celebrity Ambassador AKIIN SHUGA performing at the event



Keep Polio@Zero Planning Committee Members



Polio Celebrity Ambassador Sani Danja



Polio Celebrity Ambassador ALI BABA performing



DGN Remi Bello (right) PDG Ijeoma Okoro and Dr Tunji Funsho



Dr Tunji Funsho and Kate Henshaw Polio Celebrity Ambassador



Kate Henshaw and Rtn. John Senaya MC at the concert



Classical Singer, Ranti Ihimoyan performing during the concert



From left - Mrs Lara Raji, PDG Niji Raji, DGN Remi Bello, Mrs Bello and FC Gbenga Olayiwole



Polio Celebrity Ambassador ALI BABA





ADVOCACY VISIT TO AKWA IBOM STATE GOVERNOR



From left - Dr Tunji Funsho, Mr. Moses Ekpo, Deputy Governor of Akwa Ibom State, RIVP Yinka Babalola and DG Sam Uko during an Advocacy Visit to the State



From left - PDG Charles Lawani, DG Nze Anizor, DG Victor Onukwugha, DG Sam Uko, Dr Tunji Funsho at the Deputy Governor's office, Akwa Ibom State



DG Sam Uko (left) Dr Tunji Funsho & RIVP Yinka Babalola during the advocacy visit to Akwa Ibom State Governor

