



# Polio News

## Eradication

Issue 6 – December 1999



**NIDs  
Update**  
Page 2

**NIDs  
Calendar**  
Page 3

**New Vaccine  
Alliance**  
Back page

A Newsletter for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative  
Expanding Programme on Immunization Department of  
Vaccines & Biologicals, World Health Organization  
in association with Rotary International,  
United Nations Children's Fund and the  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Gates & Turner donate 78 million dollars to polio eradication

**T**HE Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will provide US \$50 million along with US \$28 million from R. E. (Ted) Turner's United Nations Foundation in a unique partnership to support the accelerated efforts to eradicate polio by the end of the year 2000. The Gates/Turner donations will primarily be used to strengthen vaccine delivery infrastructure and to track the remaining pockets of the disease.

The two philanthropists encouraged the private and public sectors to match these gifts to ensure the next step of delivering the polio vaccine to children in developing nations is realized.



Ted Turner announced a gift of US \$1 billion for UN causes; polio funds will be distributed by the UN Foundation

"Melinda and I are committed to a world without polio and are proud to be a part of this global effort," said Chairman of Microsoft Mr Gates. "By working together we can make existing vaccines available to all the world's children."

"The people of the world can and should do this together,"

Mr Turner stated. "Our combined efforts will deliver a polio free world to the new millennium in which children are never again crippled by this terrible disease."

With this kind of contribution, a polio-free world is within reach and one of the world's largest health initiatives can be brought to a successful conclusion," said WHO Director General Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland. "I would like to thank Bill and Melinda Gates as well as Ted Turner's United Nations Foundation for these gifts." ♦



Bill Gates' philanthropic funds will be directed to priority countries and activities which are difficult to fund.

## Europe polio-free for one year

**E**UROPE celebrated a major milestone in the eradication effort in November 1999 with the first anniversary of the last known case. Melik Minas who is from an Eastern Province in Turkey near to the Iranian border, was 33 months old when he was paralysed with polio. He had never been vaccinated.

Still vigilance is needed to keep the disease out of the European region, was the message at a meeting in Ankara, Turkey in October to review progress in 18 MECACAR (Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asian Republics) countries. Sixty five million children in 18

countries have been immunized every Spring since the campaign called Operation MECACAR began in 1995. The number of reported cases in the European region has dropped from over 200 per year to zero cases in 1999. In the Eastern Mediterranean region, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan are the only remaining MECACAR countries reporting confirmed polio cases.

The MECACAR meeting called for the continuation of immunization and surveillance activities in all countries in the European Region and the Eastern Mediterranean Region until the world is certified polio-free. ♦



Last polio case in Europe?

Photo: ©WHO/EURO



## NIDs update



National Immunization Day, Delhi, December  
Photo: ©WHO/M. Crozet

**India** – In a phenomenal effort which has seen immunization carried out on an unprecedented scale, India has completed three of four monthly vaccination rounds. A record 147 million children were immunized each round during National Immunization Days (NIDs) beginning in October. Already there has been dramatic progress in India with the number of reported polio cases down 45 percent in one year from 4322 in 1998 to 2289 in 1999.

The final nationwide round on 23 January 2000 will be followed by two monthly sub-national immunization days in eight high-risk states; Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi and West Bengal pose the greatest challenge. House-to-house immunization has been added. Historically, with up to 70 percent of the world's polio cases, India is key to the global effort. (see issue 7 for more on India) ◆



Dr Bjorn Melgaard, WHO Director of V&B in Jaipur  
Photo: ©WHO/R. Tangermann

## Sierra Leone –

Twelve weeks after a ceasefire that ended eight years of civil war, government and rebel leaders in Sierra Leone agreed to support a nationwide campaign, launched on 9 October, with further rounds in November and December. President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah (pictured with rebel leaders) administered polio vaccine to some of the 800 000 children targeted. Sierra Leone is the last country to begin the nationwide campaigns necessary for eradication. The first NIDs in November 1998 were interrupted by conflict. ◆



Photo: ©Government of Sierra Leone



Photo: ©WHO/H. Elzein

**Yemen** – High ranking ministerial support for polio eradication in Yemen gave the nationwide campaigns high profile in 1999.

President Ali Abdalla Salih (pictured here) launched the first round of NIDs in Yemen on 24 October; subsequent days were launched by Vice President Abdo Rabo Monseur and the Head of the National Parliament Abdalla Al-Ahmar. The first round reached 99 percent of 3.7 million children under five targeted. Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) surveillance in the country has reached certification levels in little over a year, with 18 out of 20 governorates now regularly reporting AFP cases. As of 6 November 1999, 101 AFP cases were reported, 11 clinically confirmed polio. None was confirmed as wild polio virus. ◆

## DR Congo –

Vaccinators delivered vaccine by boat, donkey, helicopter and on foot to children who had never received any other form of health care during the nationwide polio campaign in DR Congo. Three rounds were carried out in August, September and October 1999, reaching 299 out of 307 districts. Over 80 percent of children under five were reached according to those areas that reported.

UN Secretary-General Mr Kofi Annan urged warring sides to respect a ceasefire and honour their obligation to the Lusaka accord so that the campaigns could go ahead. ◆



Photo: ©WHO/R. Franco

## NIDs News in Brief

**Benin:** Launched by the Head of State, NIDs in 1999 vaccinated over 75 percent of children under five. The government has committed funds to improving the country's cold chain.

**Djibouti:** In November, the President launched the first round of NIDs. With government, WHO and UNICEF representatives, he administered drops to some of the target population of 92 000 children under five.

**DPR Korea:** Minister of Public Health inaugurated the first round of the country's third NID which immunized around 2.3 million children under five. With support from Rotary International, UN Foundation, CDC and the governments of Sweden,

Norway and Germany, 12 000 immunization posts and 45 000 health workers were mobilized. **Iraq:** A nationwide campaign was conducted in two rounds in October and November to protect 3.5 million children under five from a polio outbreak. Two more rounds are planned for the spring.

**Somalia:** A phased polio vaccination campaign began in October in the more stable areas of the country, targeting an estimated 1.6 million children under five. Later rounds are scheduled in insecure areas. **Sri Lanka:**

Following a request from UNICEF, government troops and Tamil Tigers agreed to cease fighting for four days in September and October to allow the country's final nationwide campaign to go ahead. No cases have been reported since 1993. ◆

## NIDs calendar: December 1999 to March 2000

Month of 1st round	Country	Type of Activity	Date 1st round	Date 2nd round	Date 3rd round
<b>DECEMBER</b>	Bhutan	SNIDs	7-Dec-99	18-Jan-00	
	China	SNIDs	5-Dec-99	5-Jan-00	
	Maldives	NIDs	18-Dec-99	18-Jan-00	
	Myanmar	NIDs	12-Dec-99	16-Jan-00	◆
	Thailand	NIDs	17-Dec-99	14-Jan-00	
<b>JANUARY</b>	Cote d'Ivoire	SNIDs	20-Jan-00	20-Feb-00	
	Ghana	NIDs	15-Jan-00	19-Feb-00	◆
	Laos	SNIDs	3-Jan-00	9-Feb-00	
	Liberia	NIDs	24-Jan-00	28-Feb-00	◆ 27-March-00
	Nepal	SNIDs	23-Jan-00	27-Feb-00	26-March-00
<b>FEBRUARY</b>	DR Congo	SNIDs	1-Feb-00	15-March-00	
	India	SNIDs	27-Feb-00	26-March-00	◆
	Myanmar	MopUp	26-Feb-00	26-March-00	
	Sierra Leone	NIDs	28-Feb-00	27-March-00	
	Sudan	NIDs	23-Feb-00	29-March-00	◆
<b>MARCH</b>	Armenia	MopUp	March-00	April-00	
	Bangladesh	NIDs	3-April-00	3-May-00	
	China	HRRI	March-00	April-00	
	Cote d'Ivoire	SNIDs	12-March-00	15-April-00	
	Egypt	NIDs	March-00	April-00	
	Ethiopia	SNIDs	24-March-00	21-April-00	
	Iraq	NIDs	March-00	April-00	
	Jordan	NIDs	March-00	April-00	
	Lebanon	NIDs	March-00	April-00	
	Mauritania	SNIDs	15-March-00	15-April-00	
	Pakistan	NIDs	March-00	April-00	◆
	Russian federation	MopUp	March-00	April-00	
	Syria	NIDs	March-00	April-00	
	Tajikistan	NIDs	March-00	April-00	
Yemen	SNIDs	March-00	April-00	◆	

*This calendar reflects information known to WHO/HQ at the time of print. Some NID dates are preliminary and may change; please contact WHO/HQ for up-to-date information.*

◆ Includes vitamin A supplementation \* Includes measles vaccination

## Polio eradication partners



# Gift of 50 million doses for final assault

**L**EADING vaccine manufacturer Aventis Pasteur (formerly Pasteur Mérieux Connaught) made a donation of 50 million doses of vaccine through WHO and UNICEF for NIDs in five countries affected by war. The donation will be supplied in 2000-2002 to Angola, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan.

"With this donation we are upholding a long-standing PMC tradition," said Michel Greco,



President and Chief Operating Officer of Aventis Pasteur. "As one of the largest manufacturers of polio vaccines, PMC has played a major role in the fight against polio and we are proud to lend our support to this final assault by WHO and UNICEF." ♦

## Playing to win for polio eradication



Photo: ©Swisscom Challenge

**A**T the Swisscom Challenge in October, top-seeded Martina Hingis pledged her personal support for the polio campaign. Appearing on centre court in Zurich, the world

number one tennis player and organizers of the women's tennis tournament handed over a cheque of US \$20,000 to WHO Executive Director Dr Michael Scholtz (*far left*). Over the last year, Hingis has donated more than US \$100,000 to WHO. ♦

## UK doubles polio funding

**T**HE UK government's Department for International Development has announced an additional £59 million for polio eradication. The new funds will be divided between the Indian sub-continent and priority countries in Africa. £38.8 million will go to the Pulse Polio Initiative of the Indian Government and £20 million to WHO for Angola, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan.

International Development Secretary Clare Short received the Polio Eradication Champion Award in 1999 on behalf of the UK government from Rotary International. ♦

## Emergency appeal for vaccine funds

**U**NICEF, Rotary International and WHO launched a joint appeal in December calling for financial support from all donor governments to purchase oral polio vaccine in a number of countries that are committed to carrying out mass immunization campaigns but lack resources to buy the vaccine. Acceleration has increased the vaccine requirement for immunization campaigns and an additional 700 million doses are still needed for year 2000. ♦

## Polio campaign in business

**T**ED Turner, Founder of CNN and Nicky Oppenheimer, Chairman of De Beers hosted a breakfast meeting in Cape Town in November organized by Rotary International. They urged South Africa's business community to follow their example and support polio eradication. Also present were Former First Lady of Mozambique Graca Machel and Chairman of the UN Foundation Board of Trustees Tim Wirth. De Beers donated US \$2.7 million to WHO for NIDs in Angola. ♦

## New funding

The Canadian government agency CIDA recently approved a grant of CAN \$6m to the polio eradication programme in Nigeria for operational costs of supplementary immunization campaigns, technical support for the implementation of activities and Acute Flaccid Paralysis surveillance.

The final decision of *Rotary International's* Board of Trustees on proposals made by WHO and UNICEF to the October IPPC meeting was to grant US \$24m to WHO and UNICEF for polio eradication activities in the WHO regions

of AFR, EMR, EUR and SEAR. The activities supported were supplemental vaccine purchase, operational costs of supplemental immunization activities, and AFP surveillance. Also included in this grant was support for technical experts.

The *Directorate General for Development Cooperation* within the *Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs* has made a US\$1m donation to the Polio Eradication Initiative in India, with funds directed to social mobilization activities.

The *International Foundation for the Millennium Fund* has contributed US \$20,000 to the production of communication and resource mobilization materials in support of the global initiative.

*Saatchi & Saatchi's* Cause Connection Department in London gave one month staff time to assist the polio initiative in the preparations of a January lunch for Indian Corporate leaders calling for their support to the initiative.

## Human chain against polio

**I**N November, Rotary International organized a human chain throughout India to focus attention and create awareness for polio. Over 500 000 children were reported to have joined hands with Rotarians across the country on a single day.

Reports poured in from all over the country about the participation of school children and community members – particularly in Bangalore, Calcutta, Chandigarh, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kanpur, Mysore, Patna and Salern. Mr Aran Jaitley, Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting inaugurated the chain and congratulated Rotary on the event.

“No government could succeed without the involvement of an NGO,” he said. Mr A.K. Walia, Delhi’s

Health Minister, stated his commitment to making Delhi polio-free by the end of the year 2000. Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Family Health and Welfare Mr A.R. Nanda and representatives of WHO and UNICEF also took part. ♦



Thousands of children join hands against polio

Photo: ©Rotary International

## NBA star Mutombo plays at home against polio



Dikembe Mutombo with fellow basketball player

Photo: ©WHO/R. Franco

**D**IKEMBE Mutombo, star basketball player with the NBA’s Atlanta Hawks, joined polio sufferers in Kinshasa, capital of his native DR Congo, for a basketball game at the National Basketball Stadium. During his visit, Mr Mutombo also visited a paediatric hospital where he immunized babies born after the first round of National Immunization Days – which took place in August. Public service announcements by Mr Mutombo were broadcast by Voice of America for the campaign.

A WHO consultant worked with provincial committees to undertake a comprehensive social mobilization programme in the East of DR Congo for the country’s 1999 NIDs. Messages recorded by political and religious leaders, women’s and youth associations in the local language (mainly Swahili) were broadcast throughout seven provinces on both independent and public service radio and television

in prime time. During meetings, Rotarians, religious and traditional leaders used megaphones to raise awareness. ♦



Rotarians mobilized in the war against polio

Photo: ©WHO/A.Gondo

## FIFA helps kick polio out of Africa



FIFA President (left), Africa Cup of Nations 1998

Photo: ©WHO/R. Franco

**A**FRICAN football players Abedi Pele, George Weah, Marcel Desailly and Jay-Jay Okocha will make an appeal to millions of African supporters to help eradicate polio from the continent during the Africa Cup of Nations (CAF) 2000. FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) has committed players and resources to give the campaign a huge boost in the final stretch.

Messages recorded by the players will be broadcast across the continent on Africa No. One, Radio France International and Canal Horizons, urging people to take their children to be immunized. Billboard ads carrying the Kick Polio out of Africa slogan will be displayed during matches at the stadiums in Ghana and Nigeria, and leaflets distributed at information booths there. Goodwill Ambassador Abedi Pele, FIFA President Joseph S. Blatter and President of the Africa Cup of Nations will appear at a FIFA/CAF press conference with representatives from WHO, Rotary International and UNICEF in January. ♦

# UNICEF boosts campaign in priority countries

**E**XECUTIVE Director of UNICEF Carol Bellamy called on government and rebel forces to guard children's rights and settle the war in DR Congo so that the nation's children can grow up in peace. During the second round of the country's national immunization campaign in September, Ms Bellamy gave polio vaccine and vitamin A to children. UNICEF has posted a senior adviser to WHO to facilitate inter-agency coordination of immunization activities in

countries affected by conflict.

In other news, at the end of November Ms Bellamy travelled to Nigeria for the second round of NIDs. The President of Nigeria has pledged US \$15 million to support five rounds of NIDs in year 2000 – a major breakthrough in one of the largest reservoirs of the virus. ♦



Carol Bellamy administers vaccine to the first of 10 million children targeted during NIDs in DR Congo.

Photo: © UNICEF/C. Yaya

# New vaccine alliance

**W**HA Resolution 41.28 had two goals – a polio-free world with greater capacity to immunize children through strengthened primary health care. Although there has been tremendous progress towards the first goal, developments in routine immunization have not always kept pace. Every effort to strengthen routine immunization will be essential to protecting the gains that have been made in polio-free areas.

Stagnation in global immunization coverage is one of the three gaps that led to the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI). The second gap was the failure to introduce new vaccines such as Hep B, Hib and Yellow fever in the poorest countries. Finally, GAVI partners were concerned about the lack of R&D for new vaccines that would prevent significant disease in the developing world. As GAVI's agenda begins with the immunization goals of the 1990 World Summit for Children, it envisages a mutually supportive role in polio eradication, helping to carry the effort through to certification in 2005.

GAVI will build on experience gained through polio eradication (PE), especially in achieving very high NIDs coverage in areas with low routine immunization. Lessons learned from PE regarding how to reach children not served by existing immunization and other



An initiative of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization

health services will be essential to progress in increasing routine immunization coverage. It will expand on the advocacy and human resources developed for PE to ensure the world's children have better access to all vaccines. GAVI will support PE in several important areas, especially by complementing PE's investments in cold-chain equipment, EPI management, transportation and communications. This way, GAVI hopes that most developing countries will have immunization coverage of at least 80% in 80% of districts by 2005 – the year the world should be certified polio-free.

PE's multifaceted partnership is a particularly useful model for GAVI. The GAVI partners include WHO, UNICEF, the Bill and Melinda Gates Children's Vaccine Program, The Rockefeller Foundation, along with national governments, the World Bank Group, technical and public health agencies and the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Associations. ♦



This document is not a formal publication of the World Health Organization (WHO). The document may, however, be freely reviewed, abstracted, reproduced or translated, in part or in whole, but not for sale or for use in conjunction with commercial purpose. The designations employed and the presentation of all material in this newsletter do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the WHO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Note on maps: dotted lines represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement. Polio News is published quarterly by EPI, WHO Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland, and part funded by USAID. Published data reflects information available at the time of print. All comments and feedback on Polio News should be sent to:

All comments and feedback on Polio News should be sent to:  
 EPI, Department of Vaccines & Biologicals, WHO, Geneva.  
 Tel.: +41 22 791 2111  
 Fax: +41 22 791 4041  
 e-mail: polioepi@who.ch  
 Web site: <http://www.who.int/gpv-polio/>

Please fill out this response coupon and return it to Polio News, EPI, Department of Vaccines & Biologicals, Documentation Center, World Health Organization, CH-1211 Geneva 27, if you would like to continue receiving this publication.

I would like to receive this publication regularly.

Name: .....

Institution: .....

Address: .....

.....

Please also send this publication to:

Name: .....

Institution: .....

Address: .....

.....

