



# Polio News

## Eradication

Issue 7 – March 2000



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A Newsletter for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative Expanded 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

## Brundtland and Bellamy Launch the Global Final Push "Every Child Counts"

**D**R Gro Harlem Brundtland, Director-General of the World Health Organization, and Ms Carol Bellamy, UNICEF's Executive Director, called for continued support for eradication in polio-endemic countries as they launched the "Final Push for Polio Eradication: Every Child Counts" on 6 January.

In her first official visit of the new century, Dr Brundtland addressed 300 delegates in New Delhi, including ambassadors from the key polio-endemic countries. Delegates looked on as 30 children with polio, representing each of the remaining endemic countries, lit a lamp of remembrance for all the people who have suffered from the disease.

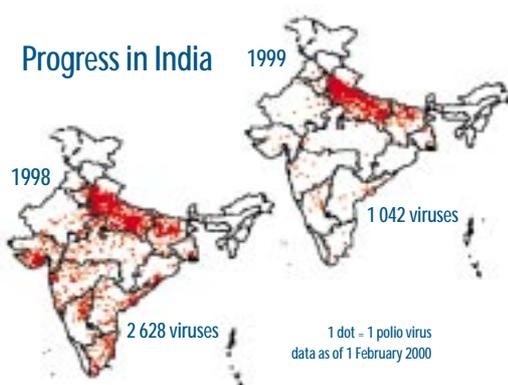
Ms Bellamy and Dr Brundtland addressed a New Year's letter to heads of state of the 30 remaining polio-endemic countries, urging full cooperation and commitment to the global effort. In New Delhi, Dr Brundtland hand-delivered the letter to India's Prime Minister, A.B. Vajpayee. ♦



Dr Brundtland gave special medallions to the children who took part in the launch

Photo: ©WHO

### Spotlight on India



### India's Cases Cut by Over Half in One Year

**D**R Brundtland used her New Delhi visit to praise Prime Minister Vajpayee for India's progress in polio eradication. She told him, "India is providing leadership in polio eradication not just on this continent but for the entire world."

India recently completed four successful rounds of National Immunization Days (NIDs) (*see stories below*). Two sub-national rounds are planned in February and March.

Even before these rounds there was dramatic progress between 1998 and 1999 especially in the southern states (*see map*). With strong AFP (Acute Flaccid Paralysis) surveillance, these regions are now preparing mopping-up campaigns. India's Ministry of Health will help ensure quality by setting up a "mop-up" rapid response unit at the National Polio Surveillance Unit (NPSU) in New Delhi. ♦

### CDC Director Makes Polio a Priority



Dr J Koplan immunizing children

**D**R Jeffrey Koplan, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, made his first official visit to India in December 1999 with polio eradication on the top of his agenda. The visit included meeting WHO's NPSU staff and participating in the third round of India's NIDs.

Dr Koplan has been key in helping countries improve surveillance, by mobilizing STOP teams (*see page 6*). ♦

### Rotary Volunteers at India NIDs

**R**OTARY International volunteers from two corners of the planet contributed to the success of one of India's recent NIDs. Eighty-four Rotary volunteers from the United States and Japan paid their own way to Bombay to participate in the NID on 23 January.

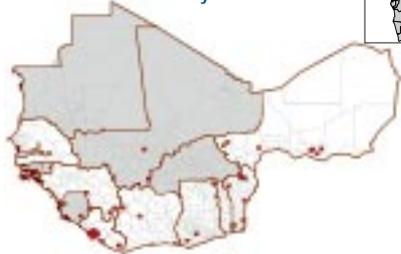
The visitors joined over 24 million Indian volunteers, including 75 000 local Rotary members and their families, to administer the polio vaccine to over

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# West Africa Block Poised for Final Push towards Polio Eradication

Virus-confirmed polio cases in West Africa since the 1998 and early 1999 NIDs\*



- Rapid improvement in surveillance
- Improvement in surveillance required
- Virus confirmed polio cases
- Pending

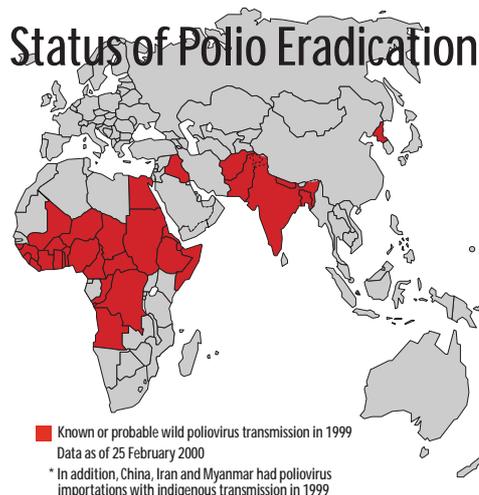
\* NIDs were Dec 1998, except Côte d'Ivoire (April 1999), Ghana (Nov 1998) and Sierra Leone (Feb 1999)

ty is still low. Successful mop-ups must cover large geographic areas as demonstrated in Cambodia and Viet Nam where 2.2 million children were immunized on a house-to-house basis in 1997 in response to their last nine polio cases.

The four countries of the West African sub-region that still have intense transmission (Benin, Liberia, Niger and Sierra Leone) will conduct four full rounds of intensified National Immunization Days (NIDs) with house-to-house immunization in the highest-risk areas in 2000. Rapid improvement in the quality of surveillance is needed in the remaining countries in the West African block to reach the year 2000 goal. ◆

**W**EST Africa is entering the final stage of polio eradication in six countries that are ready to conduct wide-scale mop-up campaigns in 2000 as a result of good surveillance and low-level poliovirus circulation. Rapidly-improving surveillance demonstrated low-level virus circulation in 1999 in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Togo, and Senegal (*see map*). Mali detected only two viruses in 1999, although surveillance sensitivity

# Status of Polio Eradication



**A**T the beginning of 1999, 50 countries were still polio-endemic. By the end of the year there were only 30. The progress is due to accelerated activities, including better routine immunization coverage, an increase in the numbers of rounds of National Immunization Days, house-to-house vaccine delivery in the highest-risk areas, and improved surveillance. Throughout 2000, the focus of the polio eradication programme is on improving the quality of activities, with the aggressive use of mop-up campaigns in many countries. ◆

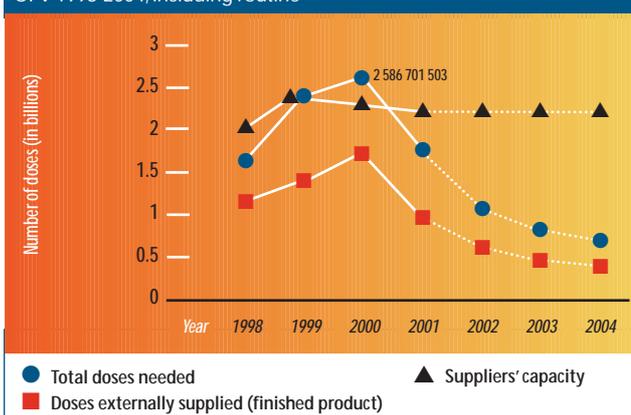
# Global OPV Supply: the Challenge for 2000

**A**CCELERATION activities in 1999 were so effective they almost outstripped the global supply of oral polio vaccine (OPV). As a result, supply must be carefully managed through 2001. WHO and UNICEF estimate polio eradication requires about 2.6 billion doses of OPV in 2000. The projected supply currently falls over 200 million doses short.

Polio eradication partners are taking several steps to ensure the shortfall does not hamper efforts to meet the end of 2000 target. A common database has been created reflecting country and regional plans allowing for close monitoring of OPV needs. There are now regular update meetings between WHO, UNICEF and manufacturers.

WHO analysts say there are two critical periods for OPV supply: from now until late April, and from the end of October through early 2001, when many countries plan their NIDs. As a result, it may be necessary to re-evaluate the NIDs schedule. It is also possible the overall demand will decrease once the impact of autumn and winter 1999/2000 NIDs are analysed.

OPV 1998-2004, including routine



Under the direction of its Executive Director, UNICEF has given manufacturers a firm commitment for purchase of the total amount of OPV available. It might also be possible to call forward OPV meant for 2001, or to use additional supply sources. For 2001 through 2004, there should be sufficient OPV supply to meet the projected demand (*see graph*).

For more information about OPV supply contact [evertsj@who.int](mailto:evertsj@who.int). ◆

## NIDs calendar: March 2000 to June 2000

Month of 1st round	Country	Type of Activity	Date 1st round	Date 2nd round	Date 3rd round	
MARCH	Azerbaijan	SNIDs	13-March-00	17-April-00		
	Côte d'Ivoire	SNIDs		24-March-00◆	23-April-00	
	DR Congo	SNIDs		15-March-00		
	Egypt	NIDs	7-March-00	8-April-00		
	Ethiopia	SNIDs	24-March-00	21-April-00		
	India	SNIDs		26-March-00◆◆		
	Iraq	NIDs	20-March-00	20-April-00		
	Jordan	NIDs	March-00	April-00		
	Lebanon	NIDs	March-00	April-00		
	Liberia	NIDs	27-March-00	15-May-00		
	Mauritania	SNIDs	15-March-00	15-April-00		
	Myanmar	MopUp		21-March-00		
	Nepal	SNIDs			26-March-00	
	Pakistan	SNIDs	March-00	April-00	June-00	
	Sierra Leone	NIDs	25-March-00	22-April-00	20-May-00◆	
	Sudan	NIDs		29-March-00◆		
	Syrian Arab Rep.	NIDs	4-March-00	10-April-00		
	Tajikistan	NIDs	28-March-00	2-May-00		
	West Bank & Gaza	NIDs	March-00	April-00		
APRIL	Armenia	SNIDs	April-00	May-00		
	Bangladesh	NIDs	3-April-00	8-May-00		
	Benin	NIDs	15-April-00	15-May-00		
	Chad	NIDs	28-April-00	26-May-00		
	DPR Korea	NIDs	April-00	May-00		
	Georgia	SNIDs	April-00	May-00		
	Ghana	MopUp	2-April-00	10-May-00		
	Guinea	SNIDs	23-April-00	22-May-00		
	India	MopUp	April-00	May-00	June-00	
	Iran	MopUp	15-April-00	15-May-00		
	Mali	MopUp	1-April-00	15-May-00		
	Russian Federation	SNIDs	10-April-00	15-May-00		
	Sudan	SNIDs	April-00	May-00		
	Turkey	NIDs	22-April-00	27-May-00		
	Turkmenistan	NIDs	10-April-00	15-May-00		
	Uzbekistan	NIDs	17-April-00	17-May-00		
	Yemen	SNIDs	April-00	May-00◆		
	MAY	Afghanistan	SNIDs	1-May-00◆	3-June-00	
		Burkina Faso	SNIDs	17-May-00	21-June-00	
Iraq		SNIDs	20-May-00	20-June-00		
Niger		NIDs	May-00	June-00◆		
Nigeria		NIDs	6-May-00◆	10-June-00		
Somalia		NIDs	May-00◆	June-00		
JUNE	Angola	NIDs	12-June-00	17-July-00	21-Aug-00	
	Bangladesh	MopUp	June-00	July-00	Aug-00	
	Namibia	NIDs	16-June-00	21-July-00		
	South Africa	SNIDs	May-00	June-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 ◆◆ vitamin A in Orissa state only \* Includes measles vaccination

### AFP and polio reporting, 1998/1999, by WHO Region, as of 25 February 2000

	AFP Surveillance, 1998/1999				Polio Cases 1999	
	Annualized <sup>1</sup> non-polio AFP rate		Adequate stool specimen <sup>2</sup>		Total Confirmed Polio Cases (clinically and virologically)	Wild Virus Confirmed Polio Cases
	1998	1999	1998	1999		
African Region	0.3	0.7	36%	31%	2718	218
Region of the Americas	0.93	0.93	73%	68%	0	0
Eastern Mediterranean Region	0.88	1.13	64%	69%	829	449
European Region	0.94	1.24	67%	75%	0	0
South-East Asia Region	1.25	1.52	60%	71%	3111	1072
Western Pacific Region	1.43	1.27	86%	86%	1*	1*
<b>Global Total</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>1.30</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>6659</b>	<b>1740</b>

<sup>1</sup> Calculated as number of AFP cases not due to polio per 100 000 population aged < 15 years. Target: >1

<sup>2</sup> Two stool specimens collected within 14 days of onset of paralysis, 24-48 hours apart, except for the Region of the Americas, where only one specimen is collected. Target: Two adequate stool specimens from at least 80% of AFP cases.

\* Importation into China (see page 6)

# FIFA – Still Kicking Hard



**T**HE Kick Polio out of Africa campaign was made visible to millions of fans during the African Cup of Nations (CAF). Billboards encouraged football fans to “Kick Polio Out” at the CAF matches in Kano and Lagos in Nigeria, and Accra and Kumasi in Ghana. Television viewers all over Africa also got the message, as the tournament matches were televised across the continent from 22 January to the final match on 13 February. The billboards are part of CAF’s and FIFA’s (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) commitment to the polio eradication campaign, which they announced during a news conference on 21 January. As a further contribution, FIFA President Joseph Blatter and Issa Hayatou, President of CAF, sent a letter to all the presidents of the African national football associations, urging them to ensure all football clubs and players actively promote polio eradication. ♦

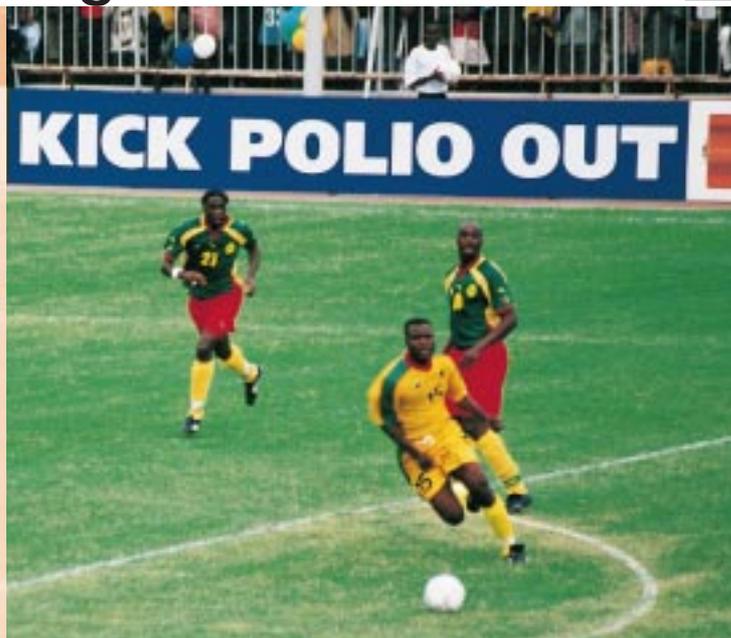


Photo: ©WHO/IFRC, Franco

## Polio Partners on the Web

**WHO:** The newly-designed WHO site includes background materials on polio eradication strategies, a global progress report which profiles the priority countries, National Immunization Days calendar, a newsroom for journalists, a photo gallery, on-line copies of Polio News, Weekly Epidemiological Records and several other technical documents about polio eradication. The site is at: [www.who.int/gpv](http://www.who.int/gpv) or [www.polioeradication.org](http://www.polioeradication.org).



**Rotary International:** The site, at [www.rotary.org/programs/polio plu/index.htm](http://www.rotary.org/programs/polio plu/index.htm), profiles Rotary International’s PolioPlus programme, and includes information about PolioPlus Partners, advocacy activities, frequently-asked questions, a photo gallery, and regional updates which include information about Rotary International’s activities in each region.

**UNICEF:** “A World Without Polio” is the title of UNICEF’s newly updated website: [www.unicef.org/polio/](http://www.unicef.org/polio/). The site includes a description of UNICEF’s role in polio eradication, links to UNICEF partner sites and photographs from around the world depicting the ongoing polio eradication drive. Visitors can download a video about the effort to carry out polio immunization in Somalia. There are also background resources, including the UNICEF pamphlet “Countdown to Polio Eradication”. The Polio Quiz, an educational and advocacy tool for youth, is also on the site.



**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** The CDC site includes information about polio vaccines, vaccination information for American citizens, regional progress reports and many more technical documents. The site is at: [www.cdc.gov/](http://www.cdc.gov/). ♦

▶▶▶ Rotary volunteers.....continued from page 1

147 million children throughout India. The NID was followed by a house-to-house search to ensure that no child had been missed. Mr Jiichiro Frank Nakajima, a member of Rotary’s International PolioPlus Committee (IPPC), led the 74 volunteers from Japan. The American volunteers were headed by Donald B. Arnheim, who stressed, “We are proud to be part of this historic effort to rid the world of a crippling disease that has impacted millions of lives throughout the centuries.” ♦



Rotarian Robert Fulton vaccinates children in Bombay

Photo: ©WHO/A. Das

## News and Announcements

### The Power and Promise of Vaccines



Photo: ©WHO/M. Zaifran

Polio eradication is featuring prominently in a new global advertising campaign sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The two-page advertisements are running in major publications throughout the year. The campaign was launched in *The Financial Times* on 27 January and *The Economist* 29 January. The importance of improving immunization and developing new vaccines was also highlighted during the launch of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) at the World Economic Forum in Davos on 31 January. Bill Gates took part in the launch, with Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, WHO, UNICEF's Ms Carol Bellamy, World Bank President Dr James Wolfensohn, and President Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique.

### Champion Award for Nigeria's President



President Obasanjo joins the African Regional Polioplus Committee

Photo: ©WHO/Rotary International

**R**OTARY International is recognizing Nigeria's President Chief Olusegun Obasanjo for his commitment to polio eradication. President Obasanjo pledged US\$15 million for the purchase of vaccine for NIDs in Nigeria in 2000, demonstrating a

genuine commitment to eradication in a key country. To acknowledge this contribution, Rotary International has awarded Obasanjo with its Polio Eradication Champion Award. The Champion Award recognizes world leaders who have made outstanding contributions towards polio eradication. Previous winners include US President Bill Clinton, former UK Prime Minister Rt. Hon. John Major, and the First Lady of Egypt Mrs Suzanne Mubarak. ◆

### Ciro de Quadros Honoured

**T**HE man who led the successful fight to rid the Americas of wild polio virus will receive the Albert Sabin Gold Medal from the Albert B. Sabin Vaccine Institute. Each year, the Institute awards the medal to an exemplary contributor to disease prevention.



Photo: ©WHO/PAHO

Dr Ciro de Quadros

Dr Ciro de Quadros, Director of the Pan American Health Organization's (PAHO) Division of Vaccines and Immunization, spent much of the 1970s fighting smallpox in Africa, before he turned to polio in the Americas. Dr de Quadros pioneered the strategic cornerstones of successful polio eradication, including National Immunization Days (NIDs), AFP surveillance, and house-to-house mop-ups. ◆

### Using the Polio Eradication Momentum to Boost Routine EPI in Pakistan

**P**OLIO eradication partners are vowing to support Pakistan in its efforts to eradicate the disease and to improve its routine immunization programme. Members of the Inter-Agency Coordination committee gathered in Islamabad on 21 February. Partners at the meeting included the Government of Pakistan, Rotary International, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Governments of Australia, Canada, Italy and Japan, WHO and UNICEF.

In addition to high-level meetings at national level, a large delegation of partner agencies, led by the Regional Director of WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region Dr H. Gezairy and Dr Nigel Fisher, Regional Director of UNICEF's South Asian Region, also visited the four largest provinces of Pakistan. They urged health leaders and provincial governors to meet the polio eradication target, and to use the polio eradication momentum to further strengthen routine immunization services. ◆

## Polio Funding

#### More Rotary Grants

Rotary's International PolioPlus Committee (IPPC) is allocating US\$ 1 225 000 for polio eradication in several countries. During the last IPPC meeting in mid-February, committee members approved grants to assist with mop-ups in Bangladesh, India, Myanmar and Nepal, and to purchase OPV for Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The committee also approved a grant for rapid response to the importation case in the People's Republic of China (*for more on this case, see page six*).

#### CDC responds to OPV Appeal

The CDC has responded to the joint UNICEF-WHO appeal for OPV, with an additional US\$ 15 million commitment for 2000. With this increase, CDC will grant a total of nearly US\$ 80 million to WHO and UNICEF in 2000.

#### Gates Funding for Polio in 2000

Bill Gates, businessman and philanthropist, has decided to bring US\$ 15 million of projected future grants forward for spending in 2000. The money is part of the US\$ 50 million donation from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for polio eradication (*see*

Polio Eradication Initiative Coordinator

Dr Bruce Aylward with Bill Gates Sr

Photo: ©WHO/G. Perkin



#### Polio News 6). WHO

will use the US\$ 15 million this year to markedly expand the programme by hiring technical experts and accelerating activities in the priority countries.

#### The World Bank works with India

The Government of India is currently working with the World Bank to develop a new US\$ 159 million loan for immunization, including polio eradication. If approved, this loan would be used from now until 2003. ◆

# Surveillance Success

## Importation Scare in China as WPRO on Verge of Certification



The yellow dot indicates the polio case in Xunhua Autonomous County, Qinghai Province.

**H**IGH quality AFP surveillance, combined with a rapid immunization response, the use of genetic sequencing and laboratory network coordination can be credited with successfully discovering and containing a wild polio virus importation in west central China.

Until late 1999, there had been no detected transmission of wild virus in China for five years. In mid-October of last year, health authorities in Qinghai Province discovered a 16-month-old boy with Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP). When two stool samples yielded wild polio virus, Chinese health authorities acted quickly to prevent further spread. They immediately began a local immunization round, followed by a large and intense house-to-house mopping-up campaign in Qinghai province. An even larger mop-up campaign targeted 7.1 million children in Qinghai and surrounding regions. Surveillance, which was already very good in Qinghai, was intensified to include an active case search in health facilities and communities. This yielded no further cases. At the same time, virologists took a careful look at the discovered virus. Laboratory sequencing in China proved that it had not previously been found in the country. The sequencing information was shared with other laboratories in the Global Polio Laboratory Network, including the SEAR Regional Reference Laboratory in Bombay. This showed the virus to be closely related to strains from both central and northern India, strongly supporting the epidemiological data that it was an importation. As a result of this investigation and reporting, China and the entire WHO Western Pacific Region may still be on track to be certified. The implications of this importation must, however, first be considered by the WPR Regional Certification Commission when it meets later this year. ♦

## “Stop Transmission of Polio” (STOP) Teams

**T**HIS year, STOP Teams will continue to play a major role in strengthening AFP surveillance in polio-endemic countries. Three groups of teams are expected to go out in 2000. Since January, one team has already worked in several key countries, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, DR Congo, India and Pakistan.

Under the leadership of the Director of CDC, the STOP initiative was launched in January 1999. This collaborative programme between the CDC and WHO, with support from Rotary International, provides technical field staff for three-month assignments to assist where local teams may need extra help. Health institutions from 24 countries around the world, including public health programmes, hospitals, research facilities and ministries of health, have made their staff available for this global effort.

Team members work with local counterparts to strengthen AFP surveillance systems, and individual STOP members often lend themselves to other activities related to polio eradication. In India for example, the first team of ten health professionals was deployed in September 1999 to work with national Surveillance Medical Officers in strengthening AFP surveillance in two key Indian states. They also assisted with three rounds of NIDs.

To date, a total of four STOP Teams comprised of 129 health professionals have been deployed to 17 countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, DR Congo, Ghana, Guinea, India, Kenya, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Northern Sudan, Pakistan, Tchad, Uganda and Yemen. For more information on STOP teams, please contact Virginia Swezy at [vswezy@cdc.gov](mailto:vswezy@cdc.gov) or Ben Nkowane at [nkowaneb@who.int](mailto:nkowaneb@who.int). ♦



STOP Team number four

Photo: ©WHO/CDC

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