

Key Events 2008

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon thanks Rotary International: “When the last chapter on polio eradication is finally written, it will... highlight your personal service to humanity. Your determination and generosity will drive us to the finish line in our race against polio.”

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India writes to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, committing “all necessary resources” to eradicate polio from the country.

Pakistan starts using finger-marking to objectively measure campaign quality.



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WHA passes resolution urging endemic countries – by name – to stop polio transmission. Confidence in polio eradication evident as WHO instructed to develop plans for post-eradication.

2008	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
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Somalia becomes polio-free again – a testament to the 10 000 health workers who stopped polio in one of the most dangerous places on earth.

Polio teams in Afghanistan use monovalent vaccines to boost immunity of children in inaccessible areas: whenever access is possible, teams deliver an additional dose of monovalent vaccine between larger-scale campaigns.



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Leaders of all four spearheading partners jointly address Rotary International Convention, as WHO Director-General Margaret Chan announces: “I am making polio eradication the organization’s top operational priority.”

Spearheading partners in polio eradication (from left) Julie Gerberding, director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Robert S. Scott, chair of The Rotary Foundation’s Board of Trustees and Rotary’s International PolioPlus, WHO Director-General Margaret Chan and Ann Veneman, Executive Director of UNICEF



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First children paralysed in Benin, as new outbreak of polio spreads from Nigeria into West Africa.

“I am making polio eradication the organization’s top operational priority.”

Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General, June 2008

Studies showing increased efficacy of monovalent type 1 oral polio vaccine (mOPV1) over trivalent oral polio vaccine (tOPV) in Nigeria are published in New England Journal of Medicine, affirming the feasibility of rapidly stopping polio in that country.

Vaccination requirements for pilgrimage to Mecca include polio.



An Indian pilgrim to the Hajj receives polio drops before travelling to Saudi Arabia.

ACPE conclusion: intensified eradication effort demonstrates that all challenges in remaining endemic countries can be overcome.

JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER

Polio workers are killed in the line of duty in southern Afghanistan when their UN-marked vehicle is car-bombed, a sombre reminder that volunteers and health workers around the world carry out their responsibilities in sometimes dangerous conditions.

36 State Governors sign Abuja Commitments to Polio Eradication in Nigeria as Bill Gates visits country. Proportion of children with no vaccination against polio in highest-risk states is halved over last year.

Leaders of G8 countries pledge at their Summit in Toyako, Hokkaido, Japan “to maintain momentum towards the historical achievement of eradicating polio, we will meet our previous commitments to maintain or increase financial contributions to support the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, and encourage other public and private donors to do the same”. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation subsequently announces an additional US\$ 150 million for polio eradication.



Bill Gates immunizes a child during his visit to Nigeria in February, 2009.