

Chairwoman Granger, members of the Subcommittee: Rotary International appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony in support of continuation of funding in the amount of US\$39.5 million for Fiscal Year 2012 for the Polio Eradication Initiative of the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) is an unprecedented model of cooperation among national governments, civil society and UN agencies to work together to reach the most vulnerable through a safe, cost-effective public health intervention, and one which is increasingly being combined with opportunistic, complementary interventions such as the distribution of life-saving vitamin A drops, oral rehydration therapy, zinc supplements, and even something as simple as the distribution of soap. The goal of a polio free world is within our grasp because polio eradication strategies work even in the most challenging environments and circumstances.

PROGRESS IN THE GLOBAL PROGRAM TO ERADICATE POLIO

Thanks to this Subcommittee's leadership in appropriating funds for USAID's Polio Eradication Initiative, 2010 saw significant progress in polio eradication.

- Only 4 countries (Nigeria, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan) are polio-endemic – the lowest number in history.
- The reduction of cases in 3 of the 4 endemic countries between 2009 and 2010 was been particularly dramatic: India 741 to 42; Nigeria 388 to 21; Afghanistan 38 to 25.
- The number of polio cases has fallen from an estimated 350,000 in 1988 to less than 1,300 in 2010 – a more than 99% decline in reported cases.
- Bivalent oral polio vaccine, which was introduced at the end of 2009, has proven to effectively target both of the remaining strains of polio, and has been a major factor in the progress made in 2010.

- Globally the number of type 3 polio cases declined from 1122 in 2009 to 87 in 2010.
- New outbreaks in Russia, Central Asia and the Republic of Congo accounted for more than half of all polio cases in 2010. Such outbreaks are a tragic and costly reminder of the need for polio free countries to maintain high quality surveillance and protect children against polio through routine immunization.
- A shortfall in the funding needed for polio eradication activities in polio affected and at-risk countries continues to pose a serious threat the achievement of a polio free world. The number of polio cases in the polio endemic countries of India and Nigeria declined by more than 90% in 2010 as compared to 2009.

In summary, significant operational progress was made in 2010 despite funding challenges and outbreaks which, will continue to threaten polio free countries until polio eradication is achieved. Rotary, as a spearheading partner of the GPEI, will continue to pursue aggressive progress as outlined in the *Strategic Plan for 2010-12*.

THE ROLE OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

Rotary International, a global association of more than 32,000 Rotary clubs in more than 170 countries with a membership of over 1.2 million business and professional leaders (more than 365,000 of which are in the U.S.), has been committed to battling polio since 1985. Rotary International has contributed more than US\$1 billion toward a polio free world – representing the largest contribution by an international service organization to a public health initiative ever. Rotary also leads the United States Coalition for the Eradication of Polio, a group of committed child health advocates that includes the March of Dimes Foundation, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Task Force for Global Health, the United Nations Foundation, and the U.S. Fund for UNICEF. These

organizations join us in thanking you for your staunch support of the Polio Eradication Initiative.

ROLE OF THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID)

In April of 1996, with the support of the 104th Congress as urged by this Subcommittee, USAID launched its own Polio Eradication Initiative to coordinate agency-wide efforts to help eradicate polio. Congress has continued its commitment to polio eradication since that time. The following are highlights of USAID's 2010 polio eradication activities.

- Pakistan, the only polio endemic country with increased cases in 2010, experienced unprecedented flooding and continued conflict. USAID's humanitarian response to the floods included additional support for joint polio and measles campaigns which mitigated the outbreak. USAID's support in Pakistan to WHO's surveillance system was essential for identifying and investigating cases. Support to UNICEF for communications contributed to an increase in immunization coverage in key areas.
- USAID provided essential surveillance support to the World Health Organization to protect the polio-free status of the at-risk countries of Ghana, Ethiopia, Somalia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Yemen and achieve significant surveillance improvements in countries that had experienced outbreaks including Uganda, Mali, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Sudan, Benin and Nepal.
- USAID missions in Tajikistan and Central Asia, were at the forefront of coordinating with other donors to raise an additional \$6 million for outbreak response. USAID staff monitored immunization campaigns in high risk areas of Central Asia and helped coordinate cross—border activities and improve accuracy of information.

- In Angola, the CORE Group* focused on implementing the child registry system that had been designed and approved by the Ministry of Health in 2009. The system tracks the immunization status of every child under age 5, including polio campaign doses. Implementation included training and then supportive supervision of Volunteers.
- In India, the Core group focused on supporting the 107 High-Risk Block Plan (a plan to address highest risk districts in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar) by promoting behaviors such as hand washing and hygiene where circulation of wild polio has never been interrupted in order to increase population immunity, increase Oral Polio Vaccine efficacy, and sustain community participation in immunization campaigns.
- USAID conceived, developed and signed a groundbreaking US-Russia “Protocol of Intent” to collaborate on polio eradication. The aim of this agreement is to increase joint monitoring, advocacy and technical support in countries of mutual interest.
- The CORE Group conducted a mid-term evaluation including both a quantitative household survey and a complement of qualitative interviews and focus group discussions in each country. Results from the evaluation and lessons learned from the many years of CORE polio eradication activities are being disseminated.

In 2012, USAID will continue intense efforts to interrupt transmission of polio in the remaining infected countries, refine strategies for identifying and reaching missed children, achieve or sustain certification-level surveillance, and maintain high immunity levels in polio-free countries to reduce the risk of re-importation.

* CORE Group includes twelve US-based members and their local partners in Angola, Ethiopia, and India. The US-based partners, led by World Vision-US, are: Adventist Development and Relief Association, African Medical and Research Foundation, Africare, CARE International, Catholic Relief Services, ChildFund International, International Rescue Committee, Plan International, Project Concern International, Save the Children, Salvation Army World Service Office, World Vision-US

FISCAL YEAR 2012 BUDGET REQUEST

The World Health Organization estimates that **\$1.98** billion is needed from donors for the period 2013-2015. For Fiscal Year 2012, we respectfully request this subcommittee to provide \$39.5 million for the polio eradication activities of USAID (\$35 million - Global Health and Child Survival; \$4.5 million - Economic Support Fund), the same level included in the President's Fiscal Year 2012 request.

BENEFITS OF POLIO ERADICATION

Since 1988, over 5 million people who would otherwise have been paralyzed will be walking because they have been immunized against polio. Tens of thousands of public health workers have been trained to manage massive immunization programs and investigate cases of acute flaccid paralysis. Cold chain, transport and communications systems for immunization have been strengthened. The global network of 145 laboratories and trained personnel established during the Polio Eradication Initiative also tracks measles, rubella, yellow fever, meningitis, and other deadly infectious diseases and will do so long after polio is eradicated. NIDs for polio have also been used to distribute essential vitamin A, thereby saving the lives of over 1.25 million children since 1988. A study published in the November 2010 issue of the journal *Vaccine* estimates that the global polio eradication initiative to eradicate polio could provide net benefits of at least \$40-50 billion if transmission of wild polio viruses is stopped within the next five years. Polio eradication is a cost-effective public health investment, as its benefits accrue forever. On the other hand, more than 10 million children will be paralyzed in the next 40 years if the world fails to capitalize on the more than \$8 billion already invested in eradication. Success will ensure that the significant investment made by the US, Rotary International, and many other countries and entities, is protected in perpetuity.