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POLIO GLOBAL ERADICATION INITIATIVE

Mohamed Bin Zayed Foundation For Humanity
مؤسسة محمد بن زايد للأثر الإنساني

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GLOBAL LEADERS PLEDGE US$ 1.9 BILLION IN ABU DHABI TO END POLIO AND PROTECT CHILDREN WORLDWIDE

- New funds will help protect 370 million children from polio each year and brings the world closer to eradicating polio
- The pledging moment was hosted by the Mohamed bin Zayed Foundation for Humanity in partnership with the Global Polio Eradication Initiative

ABU DHABI, UAE (8 December 2025) International leaders, philanthropists, and global health partners announced today in Abu Dhabi a collective US$ 1.9 billion to advance polio eradication. This includes approximately $1.2 billion in newly pledged funds that will reduce the remaining resource gap for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative's (GPEI) 2022-2029 Strategy to $440 million. The funds will accelerate vital efforts to reach 370 million children each year with polio vaccines, alongside strengthening health systems in affected countries to protect children from other preventable diseases.

The global pledging event, 'Investing in Humanity: Uniting to End Polio', was hosted by the Mohamed bin Zayed Foundation for Humanity in partnership with GPEI, and took place at Abu Dhabi Finance Week.

The event was attended by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice Chairman of the Mohamed bin Zayed Foundation for Humanity; Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary, Minister for Planning and Development, Pakistan; Bill Gates, Chair of the Gates Foundation; and Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization; alongside leaders from governments, multilateral institutions, and the private sector.

Pledges were made from a diverse group of donors and countries, including: $1.2 billion from the Gates Foundation; $140 million from the Mohamed bin Zayed Foundation for Humanity; $450 million from Rotary International; $100 million from Bloomberg Philanthropies; $154 million from Pakistan and $62 million from Germany; $46 million from the United States of America; $6 million from Japan; $4 million from the Islamic Food & Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA); and $3 million from Luxembourg.

"We are on the cusp of eradicating polio and securing a historic win for humanity. But we need all countries, partners and donors to step up now to get the job done," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization. "The new support pledged in Abu Dhabi will be instrumental in helping the GPEI reach all children in the final endemic countries and stop variant polio outbreaks around the world."

A Legacy of Leadership

His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, is a global leader in polio eradication, committing $525 million since 2011 and bringing global resources and attention to the cause. The UAE's Emirates Polio Campaign has also distributed more than 850 million vaccine doses to children across Pakistan since 2014, with a focus on immunizing children in remote and hard-to-reach communities.

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Today's pledging moment is the third hosted in Abu Dhabi, following summits in 2013 and 2019 that collectively raised $6.6 billion for GPEI's work to end polio.

"Today's pledges demonstrate our shared determination to end polio and protect every child from this preventable disease," said Her Highness Sheikha Mariam bint Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Chair of the Mohamed bin Zayed Foundation for Humanity. "Decades of progress has proved that a polio-free world is within our reach when we act together. Under the guidance of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, we are proud to stand with countries, donors and partners as we work hand-in-hand to achieve it."

Polio Eradication: A Proof Point for Global Partnership

Wild poliovirus is now endemic in only two countries - Afghanistan and Pakistan - but outbreaks of variant poliovirus still threaten children around the world. The pledges announced today reaffirm international resolve to finish the job and protect future generations from a disease that once paralyzed 1,000 children every day across 125 countries.

Success would make polio just the second human disease ever eradicated—after smallpox—and is projected to save the world more than $33 billion by 2100 compared to the ongoing cost of outbreak control.

"The fight to end polio shows what is possible when the world invests together in a shared goal. We're 99.9 percent of the way there – but the last stretch demands the same determination that got us this far," said Bill Gates, Chair of the Gates Foundation. "This renewed funding will help us cross the finish line and strengthen the systems that protect children from this terrible disease for good."

Bloomberg Philanthropies has also been a partner in the fight to eradicate polio for more than a decade, investing $325 million to date. Their support of the GPEI has helped deliver lifesaving vaccines to children in some of the world's most challenging areas, and ensured that surveillance, outbreak response, and immunization systems remain robust.

"Bloomberg Philanthropies has been teaming up with the Gates Foundation for more than a decade to eradicate polio – and we are within striking distance of what would be a monumental achievement," said Michael R. Bloomberg, founder of Bloomberg L.P. and Bloomberg Philanthropies, and WHO Global Ambassador for Noncommunicable Diseases and Injuries. "This new $100 million in support for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative and our partners around the world will help us get there - and help spare more people from the terrible effects of this disease."

The hard work of governments, advocates, researchers and partners has helped bring cases of polio down by over 99% since 1988. Intensive efforts to reach every child with polio vaccines have also led to improvements in broader health infrastructure such as routine immunization, disease surveillance, and emergency response.

Despite this progress, the journey toward eradication is not linear. After historic lows in 2021 and 2023, wild polio has tragically paralyzed 39 children in Pakistan and Afghanistan this year while outbreaks of variant poliovirus continue in 18 countries, underscoring that persistent challenges in reaching every child remain.

"Pakistan is committed to ending polio and protecting every child. Through innovative vaccination strategies and stronger community engagement, we are building trust and reaching more children. These efforts bring us closer to a polio-free Pakistan and a healthier future for all," said Ahsan Iqbal, Honorable Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives.

UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell said, "The generous pledges made by donors today, and many others who continue supporting the eradication effort, will help community health workers worldwide in reaching every child, especially those who are consistently missing

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vaccination in the most fragile and conflict affected areas. UNICEF is committed to play our part in eradicating polio once and for all."

Dr Sania Nishtar, CEO of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, said: "Decades of global partnership—including the convening power of the UAE and other key supporters—have brought us closer than ever before to ending polio. As we continue to work innovatively towards this shared goal, this new funding gives us renewed confidence that one day soon we can achieve a polio-free future for all children."

"Twenty million people are walking today because of polio vaccination, and we have learned, improved and innovated along the way. Rotary remains committed to seeing this fight through to the end," said Mike McGovern, Chair of Rotary International's International PolioPlus Committee.

"Germany remains steadfast in its support of the global fight against polio and has contributed to GPEI since the beginning. Thereby, we have played a key role in achieving that Nigeria and India are now considered polio-free. By working together and investing in robust health systems—including through vital contributions to WHO and UNICEF like those announced today—we can ensure that every child, no matter where they live, is protected from this preventable disease." said Reem Alabali Radovan, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany.

"Supporting children and protecting the most vulnerable is central to IFANCA's mission," said IFANCA President Dr. Muhammad Munir Chaudry. "We are proud to renew our commitment to the global effort to end polio and to help ensure every child is reached with lifesaving protection. The last mile is the hardest, but we stand with our partners across GPEI to finish the job and create a world finally free of polio."

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About the Mohamed bin Zayed Foundation for Humanity

The Mohamed bin Zayed Foundation for Humanity is an innovative philanthropy dedicated to advancing human potential and opportunity. We invest in the building blocks of human progress: strengthening health systems, reducing the burden of preventable diseases, and empowering communities to thrive.

The Foundation's work is guided by the vision of our founder, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who grew up alongside the UAE's transformation and saw how ambition, collaboration and resolve could redefine opportunity.

Building on this conviction, the Foundation focuses on challenges that are often underfunded or overlooked but hold the potential to deliver outsized human impact. By working in partnership with countries and communities to support progress, we seek to create impact that endures, for this generation and those to come.

For more information, visit: www.mohamedbinzayedfoundation.org

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About the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI)

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative is a public-private partnership led by six core partners: the World Health Organization, Rotary International, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, UNICEF, the Gates Foundation, and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. Since 1988, GPEI has reduced polio cases by over 99% and protected billions of children through vaccination.

For more information, visit: https://polioeradication.org/

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