



Australian High Commission, Abuja

MEDIA RELEASE

Further Australian support for polio eradication

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Australia will provide further funding of \$80 million to help eradicate polio.

The Australian Prime Minister Ms Julia Gillard has announced that the funding will be delivered over four years from 2015 to 2018 through the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI).

This contribution follows a \$50 million commitment to the GPEI from 2011 to 2014 announced by the Prime Minister at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth in October 2011.

“Polio is a debilitating disease that continues to strike the world's most vulnerable people, especially children” said Australia’s High Commissioner to Nigeria, Jonathan Richardson.

“The new contribution brings Australia's total commitment to polio eradication to over \$130 million. Nigeria is working to defeat this disease through the National Polio Emergency Plan, and we hope Australia’s support will help complete this task.”

Since 1988, there has been a reduction in the number of polio cases by 99.9 per cent. Following the certification of India as polio-free in 2012, polio remains endemic in only Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria.

“The world now has polio eradication within its reach. This would be the second disease to be eradicated globally after small pox and a major victory for international aid and public health”, Mr Richardson said.

Australia has a proud history of support for polio eradication. It was Australia's Sir Clem Renouf who, as President of Rotary International in 1978 and 1979, led the international campaign to vaccinate every child against polio. As a result of these early efforts by Rotary, the global community came together in 1988 to launch the GPEI.

The GPEI is a public-private partnership led by national governments and spearheaded by the World Health Organisation, Rotary International, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and UNICEF. Its goal is to eradicate polio worldwide.

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