



Rotarian Action Group for Polio Survivors and Associates

(The living legacy of the Rotary Polio-Plus polio eradication program through humanitarian assistance to polio survivors of the world. This Action Group operates in accordance with Rotary International policy, but is not controlled by Rotary.)

Polio Post – March 2007

The first objective of Polio Survivors and Associates, a Rotary Action Group is to assist in every way we can to help in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Recently RI President Bill Boyd issued the following letter to all Rotarians in an effort to identify more clearly the position of Rotary International and its 1.2 million member Rotarians.

Dear fellow Rotarians,

I'm writing to all of you to clarify some recent press reports that mischaracterized a recent meeting hosted by Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization, as a debate on whether to continue the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.

I, along with past RI President James Lacy and Trustee Robert Scott, attended this meeting at which we heard Dr. Chan speak powerfully in support of polio eradication. In her opening remarks, she stated that anything other than eradication was unacceptable. She also let it be known that a different way of doing business was required in order to achieve a polio-free world.

To that end, high-level representatives from governments, donors and international agencies, endorsed a final plan with clear milestones over the next 24-months.

These major stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment as the overwhelming financial and human benefits of eradication were presented and supported by an independent Harvard study, which indicated that the economic benefits to the United States alone will exceed US\$180 billion this century with the total cost of eradication estimated at US\$5 billion. All agreed to improve the quality of vaccination campaigns in the four endemic countries (Afghanistan, India, Pakistan and Nigeria), and to mobilize the necessary funds to complete polio eradication.

What does all this mean for Rotary? We promised the children of the world that they would grow up in a world without polio, and that their children would not have to face the threat of this crippling and potentially fatal disease. If we are to fulfill that promise, we need to stay focused until there is no more wild polio virus.

We know that the only way to protect every child from polio is to eradicate it completely. The strategies and tools are known, and health experts agree that the challenges to stopping the spread of polio can be met. Since Rotary was the first organization to have the vision of a polio-free world, we need to sustain our commitment to creating a world with one less threat for every child.

W.B. (Bill) Boyd President, Rotary International