

Rotary's \$100 Million Challenge Launched to Rotary Clubs to end Polio

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Rotary International is launching today a \$100 Million Challenge to Rotary Clubs to match the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation \$100 million grant to the Rotary Foundation for polio eradication.

“Each Rotary club is being asked to contribute at least \$1,000 annually to the challenge for the next three years,” Dr Robert S Scott, trustee chair of the Rotary Foundation said. “If you consider there are nearly 33,000 clubs in the world, their combined fundraising efforts would result in almost the full matching amount of \$100 million. The \$200 million that will be generated will be a vital catalyst in support of polio eradication,” “However, more will be needed to finish the job. Rotary along with its partners in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative — the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and now the Gates Foundation —

must continue to be advocates for donor nation support to help fund the push to finish polio once and for all.”

“All Rotarians are invited to participate in the challenge, especially those who have joined Rotary since June 2005, when the last commitments to the previous polio eradication funding campaign were fulfilled. Rotary clubs chartered since that time are also a special focus. “PolioPlus is Rotary’s only corporate programme, and I believe that all Rotarians will want to share in the legacy of wiping out a disease that has caused so much disability and death worldwide,” Scott said. He added that Rotary Fellowships, Rotarian Action Groups, Rotary Foundation alumni, Rotaractors, and Interactors are also being invited to participate.”

Rotary has until 31 December 2010 to match the Gates Foundation challenge grant. A task force is also providing oversight and direction to clubs and districts. Allan Jagger President of Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland is a member of the new Rotary \$100 Million Challenge Committee. Allan said “The polio eradication grant is one of the largest challenge grants ever given by the Gates Foundation and the largest grant received by Rotary in its 102-year history. Polio eradication has been Rotary’s top priority since 1985. Since then, Rotary has contributed \$633 million to the eradication effort. The extraordinary dedication of Rotary members has played a critical role in bringing polio to the brink of eradication. I urge all Rotary Clubs in Great Britain and Ireland to support this initiative.”