

# Polio

Eradication  
Initiative



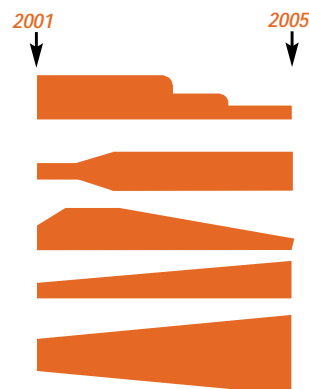
Strategic Plan  
2001 – 2005

## Executive summary

**E**xtraordinary progress has been made toward global eradication of poliomyelitis. Only 30 countries were considered endemic at the end of 1999, down from 50 in 1998. In contrast, it required a decade to reduce the number of endemic countries from 125 in 1988 to 50 in 1998. However, polio transmission is likely to occur in up to 20 endemic countries after 2000, and considerable work remains to achieve polio eradication. If high-quality activities are rapidly undertaken, the 2005 target of certifying the world polio-free can be met – with subsequent annual savings of US\$ 1.5 billion due to cessation of vaccine administration and averted health care costs.

The eradication of polio requires a programme of work which includes strategic implementation in polio-endemic countries and aggressive laboratory containment of poliovirus stocks in industrialized countries. In order to realize the full humanitarian and economic benefits of polio eradication, the agenda needs also to extend to international consensus building of future immunization policy. The Strategic Plan 2001–2005 defines the five main categories of activities necessary to realize polio's eradication and the certification of eradication in 2005, as follows:

- **Conduct effective and high-quality national immunization days (NIDs), and mop-up campaigns to interrupt wild poliovirus transmission.**
- **Develop and sustain certification-standard surveillance and laboratory systems that can rapidly identify polio-infected areas.**
- **Ensure laboratory containment of wild poliovirus stocks.**
- **Develop a consensus strategy to stop polio immunization after certification of eradication.**
- **Use polio eradication to strengthen and expand routine immunization services.**



**The single greatest factor determining when polio will be eradicated is the quality of supplementary immunization activities (SIAs) and surveillance.** Poor quality activities will result in incomplete coverage during NIDs, and late detection of polio-infected areas. These problems are compounded by low routine immunization coverage in many countries.

Three key challenges must be overcome to ensure that high-quality eradication activities are implemented:

- Securing access to all children, including those in conflict-affected countries and areas.
- Ensuring adequate financial resources from the public and private sectors to meet the US\$ 450 million shortfall.
- Maintaining political commitment in both endemic and polio-free countries.

The success of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative has been due to the combined efforts of a strong public/private sector partnership, spearheaded by the World Health Organization (WHO), Rotary International, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and including national governments, nongovernmental organizations, corporations and many individuals throughout the world. The challenges outlined in this plan can be surmounted, but only if current and new partners commit their support through 2005. □