Countries and partners announce commitments to vaccinate 450 million children against polio each year and to overcome barriers to reaching every child

ABU DHABI, 19 November 2019 - Today, global leaders convened at the Reaching the Last Mile (RLM) Forum in Abu Dhabi to affirm their commitment to eradicate polio and pledge US$2.6 billion as part of the first phase of the funding needed to implement the Global Polio Eradication Initiative's Polio Endgame Strategy 2019-2023 .

This pledging event comes on the heels of a major announcement last month that the world has eradicated two of the three wild poliovirus strains, leaving only wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) still in circulation. Additionally, Nigeria – the last country in Africa to have cases of wild polio – has not seen wild polio since 2016 and the entire WHO African region could be certified wild polio-free in 2020. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of health workers, governments, donors and partners, wild polio only circulates in two countries: Pakistan and Afghanistan.

"From supporting one of the world's largest health workforces, to reaching every last child with vaccines, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative is not only moving us closer to a polio-free world, it's also building essential health infrastructure to address a range of other health needs," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization and Chair of the Polio Oversight Board. "We are grateful for the generous pledges made today and thank governments, donors and partners for standing with us. In particular, I would like to thank His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi for hosting the GPEI pledging moment and for his long-term support for polio eradication."

The commitments announced today come at a critical time for the polio eradication effort. Barriers to reaching every child – including inconsistent campaign quality, insecurity, conflict, massive mobile populations, and, in some instances, parental refusal to the vaccine – have led to ongoing transmission of the wild poliovirus in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Further, low immunity to the virus in parts of Africa and Asia where not all children are vaccinated has sparked outbreaks of a rare form of the virus. To surmount these obstacles and protect 450 million children from polio every year, governments and donors announced significant new financial commitments toward the $3.27 billion needed to support the Polio Endgame Strategy.

Pledges are from a diverse array of donors, including: US$160 million from the host of the pledging moment **His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi;** countries, including US$215.92 million from the **United States,**
US$160 million from
the Islamic Republic of Pakistan,

US$105.05 million from
Germany,
US$84.17 million from the
Federal Government of
Nigeria,
US$10.83 million from
Norway,
US$10.29 million from
Australia,
US$7.4 million from
Japan
,
US$2.22 million from
Luxembourg,
US$1.34 million from
New Zealand,
US$116,000 from
Spain,
and US$10,000 from
Liechtenstein
; GPEI partners, including US$1.08 billion from
the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
and US$150 million from
Rotary International
; philanthropic organizations, including US$50 million from
Bloomberg Philanthropies
, US$25 million from
Dalio Philanthropies,
US$15 million from the
Tahir Foundation,
US$6.4 million from the
United Nations Foundation,
US$2 million from
Alwaleed Philanthropies,
US$1 million from the
Charina Endowment Fund,
and US$1 million from
Ningxia Yanbao Charity Foundation
; and the private sector, including US$1 million from
Ahmed
Al Abdulla Group,
US$1 million from
Al Ansari Exchange,
and US$340,000 from
Kasta Technologies
. Earlier this month, the

United Kingdom
announced it would contribute up to US$514.8 million to the GPEI.

"We are proud to host the GPEI pledging moment in Abu Dhabi and thank all the attendees for their continued commitment to the eradication of polio," said Her Excellency Reem Al Hashimy, UAE Cabinet Member and Minister of State for International Cooperation. "Since launching in 2014, the Emirates Polio Campaign has delivered more than 430 million polio vaccines in some of the most remote areas of Pakistan. We remain firm in our mission to reach every last child and believe together we can consign polio to the pages of history."

In addition to overcoming barriers to reach every child, this funding will ensure the resources and infrastructure built by the GPEI can support other health needs today and in the future. Polio workers deliver Vitamin A supplements, provide other vaccines like those for measles and yellow fever, counsel new mothers on breastfeeding, and strengthen disease surveillance systems to anticipate and respond to outbreaks. As part of its commitment to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, the GPEI is also working to ensure equal participation of women at all levels of the programme.

The future of polio eradication hinges on support and engagement at all levels of the programme – from individuals to communities to local and national governments to donors. If the strategies needed to reach and vaccinate children are fully implemented and funded, we are confident that we can deliver a world where no child lives in fear of polio.