

# INDIA'S THREE-YEAR POLIO-FREE ANNIVERSARY

## *PARTNER TOOLKIT*

On 13 January 2014, India – once considered the hardest place to eradicate polio – will celebrate three years without a case, with official WHO certification occurring in late March and a high-level celebration planned for 11 February. The third anniversary provides an opportunity to recognize the importance of India's achievement, highlight the power of vaccines and encourage continued political and financial support for polio eradication.

This toolkit provides language and content to help you and/or your organization spread the word about India's achievement among influencers, media and advocates in donor markets.

We ask that you support this effort on 13 January through the following activities:

- **Communicate shared messages** on India's achievement and the benefits, feasibility and urgency of eradication (included below)
- **Disseminate content** from the toolkit via your website and social media channels
- **Share this toolkit** (in advance of the milestone) with other relevant organizations and/or individuals and encourage their support

We hope you will work together with us to amplify attention to the milestone. On 13 January, **we ask each partner to commit to** at least:

- 3-5 tweets, all using the shared hashtag #endpolio
- 2-3 retweets of other partner content (follow #endpolio)
- 1 Facebook post
- 1 Tumblr and/or Instagram post

Please consider using the content we provide to create a post for your blog or website. If all partners contribute at this level, we can connect with many millions of people about this historic milestone.

### **CONTENTS**

This toolkit includes:

- [Overview](#)
- [Digital Media Assets](#)
- [India Resources](#)
- [Key Messages](#)
- [Tough Q&A](#)
- [Examples of Broader Benefits of India's Polio Efforts](#)

## OVERVIEW

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### **India marks three years without a case of wild polio on 13 January 2014, a landmark achievement for global public health and the worldwide effort to eradicate polio.**

- The three-year milestone carries official significance: the Regional Certification Committee (RCC) is expected to convene in March and evaluate data from the entire Southeast Asia Region in order to certify the region as polio-free.
- Experts once considered India the most technically difficult place to end polio.
  - As recently as 2009, India was home to nearly half the world's polio cases.
  - High population density, migrant populations and poor sanitation presented exceptional challenges to eliminating the disease.
- With commitment from all levels, India launched a comprehensive polio effort and built a robust health infrastructure to eliminate the disease. The effort included:
  - A surveillance network of more than 33,000 reporting sites
  - An army of 2.3 million vaccinators deployed during national immunization days
  - Strategies to reach children with vaccines, even in the country's hardest-to-reach areas, resulting in delivery of 900 million doses of oral polio vaccine in 2011 alone

[Back to Top](#)

## DIGITAL MEDIA ASSETS

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The following blurb, sample social media posts, photos, links and share graphics are meant to be shared widely through websites and social media channels. The photos and share graphics are shared as links below.

### **BLOG/EMAIL BLURB**

13 January 2014 marks three years since the last case of polio in India, with official World Health Organization (WHO) certification expected in late March. Long considered the hardest place on earth to end polio, India is now a case study for how to mount a successful disease response effort under the most complex circumstances. India's triumph over polio is a significant public health achievement, leaving a lasting impact on children's health in India and around the world.

### **SAMPLE TWEETS**

The below tweets may also serve as Facebook/Instagram posts, accompanied by photo or a link. In all Twitter posts, we ask that you use the common #endpolio hashtag.

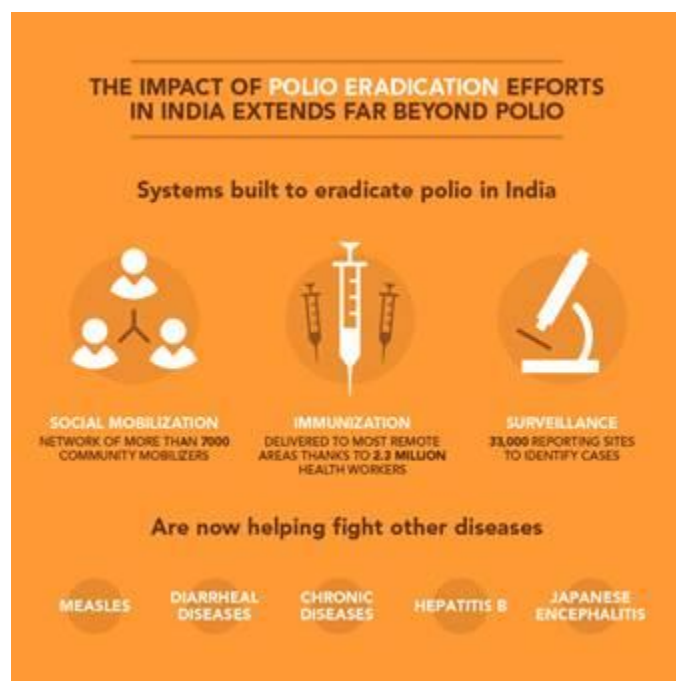
- Today #India marks 3 years without a case of polio—truly one of the greatest #publichealth achievements in history. #endpolio
- It's been 3 years since #India reported a polio case. This success proves we can #endpolio everywhere, and we're on our way.
- #India is 3 years polio-free today, and the innovations that helped end the disease there are now helping #endpolio worldwide.
- Congratulations #India, which today marks 3 years since its last case of polio! The lessons learned are helping #endpolio everywhere.

- #India shows efforts to #endpolio improve child health by strengthening health systems, delivering #vaccines & fighting other diseases.
- As we celebrate 3 years without polio in #India, we continue pushing to #endpolio worldwide. No child should suffer from this disease.
- It's time to #endpolio forever. #India, which today marks 3 years without a case, proves it can be done.
- Today we celebrate one of the greatest #publichealth achievements in history—3 years without a case of polio in #India. #endpolio
- #India will soon be certified polio-free, proving we can eradicate the disease everywhere and #endpolio forever. Now is the time.
- Thanks to millions of vaccinators and hundreds of millions of #vaccines, #India is polio-free. Now it's time to #endpolio everywhere.
- #India reported its last case of polio 3 yrs ago, now lessons learned are helping other countries #endpolio: <http://twitpic.com/drmfsg>
- As #India marks 3 yrs without polio, #infographic looks at broader health benefits of program to #endpolio: <http://twitpic.com/drmfqd>
- Interesting article from @WSJ details how #India worked to #endpolio: <http://on.wsj.com/KttOfW>
- .@ShotAtLife looks at how lessons learned from #India can help #endpolio in other countries: <http://bit.ly/1dKc6UZ>
- Fascinating Q&A from @ShotAtLife details #India's work to #endpolio and how others can learn from it: <http://bit.ly/1cTSQVc>
- Check out this video on the role children can play in helping to #endpolio: <http://bit.ly/1f98zD4>
- A health worker's perspective on how #India worked to #endpolio: <http://bit.ly/1cwladZ> (via @gatesfoundation)
- A fantastic photo essay that illustrates how #polio was eliminated from rural #India: <http://bit.ly/1bLCtFy> #endpolio
- Polio survivor @RameshFerris congratulates India on 3 yrs polio-free, reminds us why we need to #endpolio everywhere <http://bit.ly/1lznpmB>
- On India's 3yr #polio-free anniversary, survivor @RameshFerris calls on us to #endpolio everywhere. Thanks, Ramesh! <http://twitpic.com/drjf0c>

- In celebration of India's #polio-free anniversary, great read about 5 inspiring survivors and why we must #endpolio <http://bit.ly/JHQJc0>

## **SHARE GRAPHICS**

The below graphics can be shared on Facebook, Twitter and your website. Captions and links to high resolution versions are also included.



**Caption:** As India marks three years since its last case of polio, a look at how the eradication program is helping serve broader health goals.

(Please find graphic online [here](#))



**Caption:** India reported its last case of polio three years ago. The lessons learned there are helping other countries eradicate this devastating disease once and for all.

(Please find graphic online [here](#))

## **PHOTOS**



**Credit:** Rotary International  
*(Please find graphic online [here](#))*



**Credit:** Rotary International  
*(Please find graphic online [here](#))*



**Credit:** Rotary International  
*(Please find graphic online [here](#))*

### **PARTNER ANNIVERSARY CONTENT**

Partners are preparing the following for January 13. Once posted online, each can be shared via social media.

#### **BMGF**

- Video from St. Stephen's Hospital, India
- Facebook Q&A on January 16

- Vine showing progress from 1988-2013
- Impatient Optimist blog posts on the significance of the anniversary and reflections from BMGF staff that worked in India

### Rotary

- Share graphics on those involved in the polio campaign in India

### Other

- Ramesh Ferris: [Polio Survivor Ramesh Ferris on India 3 Years Polio Free!](#)
- Mental Floss: [5 Inspiring People Living with Polio](#)

[Back to Top](#)

## INDIA RESOURCES

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The following articles provide background on the eradication effort in India, and can be referenced in blog posts, email content and on social media. Some of the below links are also in the tweets above.

- UNICEF: [The Journey to a Polio-Free India](#)
- Impatient Optimists: [India's Health Workers on How to Eradicate Polio](#)
- Impatient Optimists: [Polio Eradication: India's Pursuit of Perennial Prevention](#)
- shot@life: [Finding Hope in Revolutionary Optimists](#)
- shot@life: [Q&A: How India Stopped Polio](#)
- shot@life: [Stopping Polio: Lessons from India](#)
- Wall Street Journal: [On World Polio Day, India's Progress](#)

[Back to Top](#)

## KEY MESSAGES

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These key messages can be integrated into written content and provided to organization spokespeople in the event of a media interview.

### **We have a unique window of opportunity to change history and end polio.**

- India's success against polio is a significant achievement in public health and proves that the disease can be eliminated in even the most challenging of circumstances.
- Its success provides confidence, inspiration, and technical guidance for stopping polio in the three remaining countries where polio has never been stopped – Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Nigeria.
- We must capitalize on India's achievement to end polio globally and protect the health of children everywhere for generations to come.

**We are addressing the remaining challenges with a solid plan to achieve a lasting polio-free world by 2018.**

- Lessons learned in India are helping to drive progress in the remaining endemic countries.
- India's success was due to strong political commitment at all levels, dedication of resources and numerous innovations and tools to wipe out the disease.
  - The Government of India and public-private partnerships together put in almost US\$2 billion to the polio eradication campaign.
  - The government's India Expert Advisory Group addressed challenges quickly, such as reaching high-risk children missed by polio vaccines.
  - Religious and community leaders and organizations helped build support from families for vaccination and the polio program.
- Strategies from India's polio program inform the new global strategic plan to secure a lasting polio-free world by 2018, which is helping drive progress in the endemics. For example, the plan calls for:
  - Implementing strategies used in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to identify, track and immunize migrant and neglected populations.
  - Increasing human resources at the sub-district level and engaging community mobilizers.
  - [See [broader benefits](#) for additional examples]

**Ending polio is a critical step toward improving the lives of the world's most vulnerable children.**

- India's success with polio eradication is leading the way for other initiatives to improve child health.
  - The polio surveillance system is being used to improve routine immunization, including vaccination against measles and other life-threatening diseases affecting children under five.
  - The network of community health workers is delivering maternal and child health services, as well as other life-saving vaccines.
  - Religious councils developed to encourage polio vaccination are taking on new health and development challenges.
  - [See [broader benefits](#) for additional examples]

**Progress in endemic countries shows that the Strategic Plan is working, but we must overcome challenges in the remaining reservoirs to ensure a polio-free world.**

- While India's anniversary is a significant milestone and proof of what is possible, recent outbreaks in the Middle East (with cases in Syria) and the Horn of Africa – both linked to virus from endemic countries – are proof that as long as polio exists anywhere, it is a threat everywhere.
- The remaining endemic countries made important gains eliminating the virus from its last reservoirs in 2013:
  - Strong progress in Afghanistan's Southern Region
  - Nigeria's case count decreased by more than 55%, with four Nigerian states that had polio in 2012 reporting zero cases in 2013.
  - Excluding the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and parts of KP, where access to at-risk children poses a major concern, Pakistan decreased cases by more than one-third in 2013. Lack of access to children in Pakistan's North Waziristan remains a critical roadblock that must be overcome.

## TOUGH Q&A

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The below questions and answers are meant to prepare organization spokespeople in advance of any media interviews.

- **Weren't there cases of polio in India this year?**
  - These few cases were caused by a rare mutation of the weakened but live virus in the oral polio vaccine (OPV) that can cause paralysis.
    - This happens to 1 out of every 2.7 million children receiving a first dose of OPV.
  - OPV has unique properties that make it a highly effective tool for interrupting polio transmission. It has successfully eliminated 99% of polio cases worldwide, and eliminated one of the three serotypes of wild poliovirus (WPV), type 2, which has not been recorded since 1999. There also hasn't been a recorded case of WPV type 3 since November 2012.
  
- **Is India at serious risk of reinfection? Is that why India recently imposed travel restrictions on visitors from polio-affected countries?**
  - As 2013's outbreaks in the Horn of Africa and Syria show, polio can travel anywhere as long as a source exists.
  - To limit the risk of reinfection, India continues to vaccinate children regularly and maintain a robust surveillance system.
  - Requiring visitors from polio-affected countries to be immunized against polio before visiting India further reduces the risk of cross-border transmission.
  - Ultimately, interrupting transmission in the remaining endemic countries is critical to protecting India's gains and preventing future outbreaks.
  
- **Aren't challenges like insecurity derailing polio eradication?**
  - Insecurity remains a major problem, particularly in northern Nigeria and northern Pakistan, because it limits health workers' access to at-risk children.
  - Ensuring access to children in all areas is critical to polio eradication efforts and global child health.
  - Fortunately, high-level political figures have expressed commitment to eradication:
    - The leaders of Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan all publicly committed the full support of their governments to polio eradication. They are joined by religious, traditional and community leaders in their commitment to stop transmission in their country.
    - Imran Khan, head of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party based in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, recently voiced his commitment to polio vaccination and global eradication.
    - Prominent Pakistani religious scholar Maulana Sami-ul-Haq recently issued a fatwa urging parents to immunize their children.
  - At the same time, however, ongoing operational challenges must continue to be addressed.



- **Can countries with fewer resources afford the kind of comprehensive and intensive polio strategy that India used?**
  - The Strategic Plan budget includes support for polio eradication in areas where available domestic resources are not sufficient.
    - At the Global Vaccine Summit in April 2013, global donors pledged \$4 billion – three quarters of the plan’s \$5.5 billion budget
  - Beyond funding, a critical element of India’s success was political commitment to the program.
    - The leaders of Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan have all publicly committed the full support of their governments to polio eradication. They are joined by religious, traditional and community leaders in their commitment to stop transmission in their country.
  
- **What are the prospects for achieving a polio-free world, given the setbacks with outbreaks in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East?**
  - As long as polio exists anywhere, outbreaks are inevitable.
  - However, we are better equipped to address outbreaks than ever before.
    - We have better vaccines, better response strategies and higher political commitment and engagement than at any time in the history of polio eradication. We have the tools to eradicate the disease, so long as we remain focused on stopping transmission in the endemic countries, the only remaining source of the virus.
    - This progress was demonstrated in the Horn of Africa this year, where the outbreak appears to have peaked, with no new cases in Banadir, the ‘engine’ of the outbreak, since July.
  - The recent outbreaks are a challenge, but they are not unexpected. In both contexts, conflict and insecurity have significantly impeded access to all health services. The final stretch of polio eradication will be the most difficult, but the program is well positioned to address the remaining obstacles.
  - Despite these outbreaks, there is a lot to be optimistic about in the eradication effort.
    - India’s success demonstrates what’s possible even in the most difficult circumstances, with more children being vaccinated in traditional reservoir areas than ever before in all three endemic countries.

[Back to Top](#)

## EXAMPLES OF BROADER BENEFITS

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The following are examples of ways in which the polio program in India has benefited other health initiatives in the country and around the world. These can be used as proof points for how the program brings about greater benefits to children’s health beyond polio.

### Examples in India

- **Surveillance:** The National Polio Surveillance Project (NPSP) monitors and builds capacity for other vital health programs, such as measles and Japanese Encephalitis (JE) vaccinations, and for India’s Universal Immunization Program (UIP). Specifically, the NPSP’s training and program

monitoring have improved cold chain handling capabilities, which helped in the introduction of Hepatitis B and JE vaccines to the UIP. [Source: *Polio In India Factsheet/CDC*]

- **Ulema Committees:** To foster community support for polio eradication, Rotary formed an Ulema Committee in Uttar Pradesh comprising senior Muslim scholars and religious leaders to address issues of resistance. Ulemas are now sought by the Health Ministry to advocate for other health and sanitation needs in Muslim communities. [Source: *IndiaInk/Rotary*]
- **Megacamps:** Free vaccination camps in India helped dispel the cloud of apprehension about accessing free health care and created a favorable environment for expanded services. Health care professionals are now following the same one-day immunization camp model to target chronic diseases—illnesses aggravated by poor environmental and demographic factors such as population density, contaminated drinking water, malnourishment, and unhygienic sanitary conditions. [Source: [Rotary](#)]

### Examples Around the World

- **Emergency Action Plans:** Lessons from India informed endemic countries' Emergency Action Plans (EAP). For example, the EAP calls for implementation of special strategies used in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to identify, track and immunize migrant and neglected populations. [Source: *EAP 2012-2013*]
- **Strategic Plan:** Lessons from India, such as increasing human resources at the sub-district level and engaging community mobilizers, informed the Strategic Plan's activities within the three remaining endemic countries. Intensifying these approaches forms a key component of the GPEI's activities to interrupt transmission. [Source: *Strategic Plan*]
- **Learning Exchange:** The India Polio Learning Exchange promotes information sharing through teleconferences and video conferences. Materials and training manuals are also available online and sent to countries as needed. For example, Nigeria uses these training materials for their volunteer community mobilizer network. [Source: [UN Foundation](#)]
- **Monitoring:** India's effective monitoring system identified corrective actions on the spot for immediate follow-up. Based on this model, the Afghanistan program is revising its monitoring procedures so findings can be available for daily evening meetings during polio immunization activities. [Source: *Strategic Plan*]
- **Microplanning:** India's house-based microplans mapped children and vaccinator responsibilities at the household level rather than the district level. In Nigeria, the polio program introduced house-based microplans for the first time in 2012, heavily informed by the success in areas of India that overcame similar issues with missed areas and populations. [Source: *Strategic Plan*]

[Back to Top](#)