



POLIO GLOBAL
ERADICATION
INITIATIVE

Polio Eradication Strategy 2022–2026

**Delivering on
a promise**



BILL & MELINDA
GATES foundation





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This report reflects contributions from a process led by the GPEI agency partners: Rotary International, WHO, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

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FOREWORD

The promise of a polio-free world has been a driving force behind the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), contributing to critical health gains over the past three decades. Indeed, before the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), polio eradication signified to many what the world could achieve by joining together to protect and promote the health of all children.

As the world – and especially country health systems – adjusted to a new global health threat in COVID-19, the GPEI launched an intensive review to identify barriers to eradication and develop a new strategy to deliver on the promise of a polio-free world. The complexity of the task grew as the programme had to take inventory of challenges faced in the years before COVID-19 and define solutions that will work in a world perhaps forever altered in the wake of COVID-19. Without a doubt, the single greatest asset for this exercise has been more than 300 stakeholders who, through interviews, workshops and reviews, lent knowledge and insight into the new and unfamiliar terrain of eradicating polio while mitigating the risks and responding to the needs of a global pandemic.

Over the past few months, it has become clear that to place the GPEI back on the path to eradication, we must operate with an emergency tempo while also becoming more accountable to the collective partnership, more responsive to the intersecting needs of impacted communities, more welcoming of intersecting fields of expertise, and more integrated with social and health programmes that deliver critical interventions to vulnerable populations.

The **Polio Eradication Strategy 2022–2026** reflects the kind of integrated approaches that will be required to deliver on the promise of eradication.

Through this new strategy, we believe the GPEI has re-envisioned its relationship with governments, deepened its commitment to polio-affected communities, made changes to empower and safeguard the frontline workforce, and expanded its partnerships to achieve broader impact in polio-priority geographies, alongside key innovations that will improve detection and response. The strategy also sets clear goals for strengthening the programme's gender-responsiveness, in recognition that the more women's meaningful participation and empowerment becomes a cornerstone of GPEI efforts, as outlined in its **Gender Equality Strategy**, the more progress towards eradication will be made. In further alignment with the Immunization Agenda 2030 (IA2030) and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance's strategic plan (Gavi 5.0), the new strategy offers a more holistic approach to immunization and shares with IA2030 its principles of being people-centred, country-owned, partnership-based and data-guided.

With an updated strategy and a defined path to eradication, we must accelerate progress as we enter the 2022–2026 period. Stakeholders articulated the challenge well during the consultation process when they said, "Now is the time to do not just the good things or the hard things, but the very hard things."

As members of the Polio Oversight Board (POB), we join with the broader partnership in expressing our commitment to greater accountability on the path to eradication. In our meetings, POB members will routinely review the strategy's new monitoring and evaluation and risk management framework. We stand with you all, rededicated to polio eradication.

Working together and in close partnership with impacted countries, we can make up lost ground against polio during the COVID-19 pandemic, while continuing to leverage the programme's infrastructure to support fragile health systems. Even as COVID-19 continues to pose challenges to health programmes around the world, we recognize an opportunity to come back stronger in our effort to create a healthier and more equitable world, which includes eradicating one of the cruelest infectious diseases and thereby ensuring polio is no longer a threat to children and families anywhere in the world.

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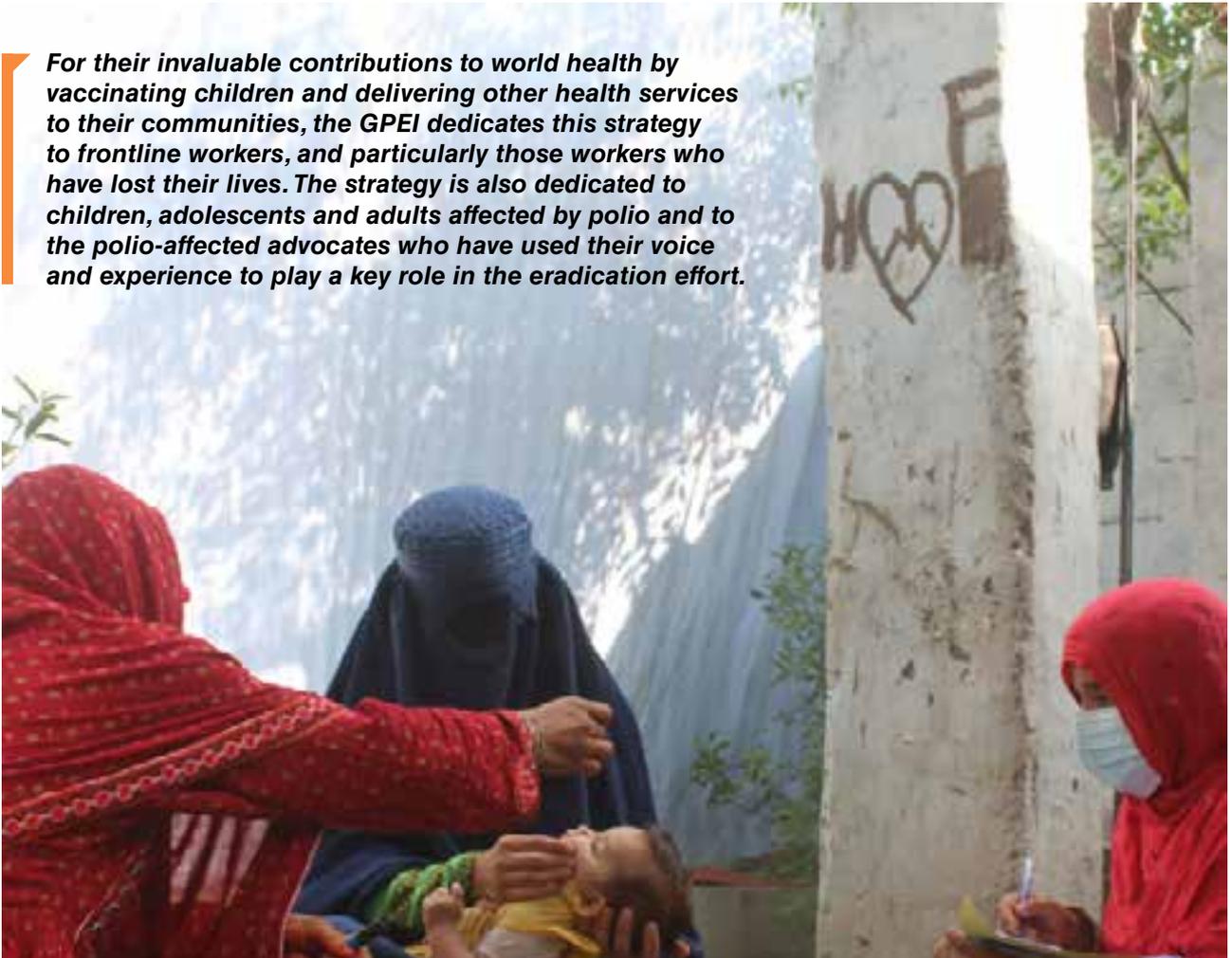
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The GPEI engaged a broad set of stakeholders throughout the development of *Polio Eradication Strategy 2022–2026: Delivering on a promise*. The engagement process benefited from the generous inputs of country teams, national governments, donors and over 40 external and internal expert groups, many that encouraged the partnership to embrace a more holistic approach to polio eradication (see **Annex A**).

The contributions of all participants resulted in a strategy that seeks to overcome the remaining challenges through a recognition that polio eradication depends upon a spectrum of partners and a diversity of actors.

For their invaluable contributions to world health by vaccinating children and delivering other health services to their communities, the GPEI dedicates this strategy to frontline workers, and particularly those workers who have lost their lives. The strategy is also dedicated to children, adolescents and adults affected by polio and to the polio-affected advocates who have used their voice and experience to play a key role in the eradication effort.



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