

Common Agenda

The death knell for polio was sounded in Perth, Australia October 2011, when leaders from 54 Commonwealth Countries met to discuss strategies to strengthen the ties between the nations. The Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group (EPG), which was set up by the Commonwealth Heads of Governments during the summit in Trinidad and Tobago in 2009, aims to sharpen the impact the nations can have and raise the profile of the member countries. Commonwealth summit is relevant because the issues they address concern some of the biggest disease and health system challenges on the global health agenda. The leaders broker consensus between the developed and developing countries that make up the Commonwealth. They also collect and articulate the issues of relevance to small states enabling them to play an active role in the global debate on health. Polio eradication is one such issue.

The Secretary General of the Commonwealth is Mr. Kamallesh Sharma an Indian Foreign Service diplomat, who has been appointed by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). Today, more than ever the member nations are monitoring our progress in eliminating polio closely. The Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Health (CACH) plays a crucial role in advising the Commonwealth Secretariat on matters of public health concern and interest to the Commonwealth. It is made up of representatives from governments, regional organisations and Civil Society Organisations (CSO's).

The year 2011 is coming to an end. Rotarians in India have done themselves proud by limiting the polio cases to just one this year. However, India will still be considered polio endemic country until we eradicate the disease. The World Polio Day, which

was celebrated on October 24, 2011, marks the birth anniversary of Dr. Albert Sabin, the inventor of the polio vaccine. The day was celebrated all over India by various districts. But celebrations must be accompanied by actions that will enable us to celebrate the eradication of polio in the years to come. This needs your urgent help in bridging the funding gap of US \$520 million.

The common bond that unites Rotarians worldwide is the spirit of service. The common agenda for Rotarians

in India today is eradication of polio. The common man in your neighbourhood is dependent on Rotary's help in eradicating polio. The common belief amongst people in the community is that Rotarians are people who will ful-

fill their promises. The most common wealth in our country can be said to be the children. They have to grow up and move to shape the future of your home, our country and the world at large. Common sense tells us that if we lose the initiative this year in eradicating polio, then we will incur the wrath of the others in the Commonwealth nations and rest of the world. The activities associated with polio eradication are commonplace. But what is unique is the determination of just 1.2 million Rotarians to bring relief to the balance 7 billion people on this earth by eradicating polio.

Our common agenda is to get rid of polio now. Don't you want to be a part of this history?



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