
Sustained Funding Necessary for Success of Global Polio Eradication Plan



"[W]e are teaming up to tackle one of the most ambitious public health goals ever set: eradicating polio, a disease that has haunted humanity at least since ancient Egypt," New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, founder of Bloomberg L.P., and Bill Gates, chair of Microsoft and co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, write in a Wall Street Journal opinion piece. "The Gates Foundation has been investing in polio eradication for many years, and Bloomberg Philanthropies is now joining the effort with a \$100 million commitment. Together, we are supporting the Global Polio Eradication Initiative's new six-year strategic plan for eradication," they continue.

"The Global Polio Eradication Initiative takes an approach that differs from past strategies, which featured short-term goals instead of a full plan for finishing the job," Bloomberg and Gates continue, noting, "The plan is based on data collected and lessons learned most recently during India's success against polio" and "also includes innovative tactics and cutting-edge tools, like geographic information-system maps that combine cartography and database technology to help locate children who have not been reached by vaccinators." They write, "With this new plan, there is finally a clear sense of the key milestones needed to end polio, a complete timeline, and an accounting of how much money it will cost in total, which is an estimated \$5.5 billion," adding, "Of course, the plan will only be successful if it is fully funded by governments, financial institutions such as the World Bank and Islamic Development Bank, and philanthropic organizations like the ones we run" (2/28).

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