

Response to Global Poverty Projects's polio eradication campaign

We are closer than ever before to ensuring that polio is the second human disease in history to be eradicated. Tremendous achievements have been made in recent years, including the end of all polio outbreaks and the certification of the South East Asian region as polio-free in 2014. The last polio case in Africa was nearly one year ago.

The UK continues to be a strong supporter of global polio eradication. In 2013, the UK committed £300million over 6 years to polio eradication, which will help vaccinate up to 360 million children. It is crucial to maintain international momentum on this issue.

The 2015 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) comes four years after several heads of government made new financial and political commitments about polio eradication at the same meeting in Australia in 2011. In the final communiqué of the 2011 Summit, leaders called for 'accelerating action and financial support to eradicate polio including by improving routine immunisation systems.'

Discussions on the final agenda for the 2015 CHOGM are still underway and Member States are awaiting formal correspondence from the Commonwealth Secretary-General. We are keen to have polio raised in Malta and are considering options to help meet our objectives whether through Ministerial meetings or in the separate CHOGM forums.

I look forward to continuing to work with Global Poverty Project, and civil society as a whole, on this important issue.

BARONESS VERMA