Excellency,

I write to express my admiration for your ongoing commitment to the eradication of polio in your country. The actions of your Government to fight this disease are laudable, in particular the appointment of a Chair of the National Security Council to oversee polio eradication activities.

It is most unfortunate that in spite of all your efforts, and those of the United Nations, the current outbreak of polio in the southern region is posing a threat to the extraordinary gains made against this disease in Afghanistan. In this regard, I would like to ask that you engage the governors and local administrators in the affected provinces in the planning, implementation and monitoring of a renewed polio immunization campaign that also involves leaders from all communities and sectors. Past experience has shown that high-quality vaccination campaigns can produce successful results, even in conflict-affected areas.

We have an historic goal within our grasp. The world is on the verge of eradicating polio once and for all. I support your continuing leadership in making polio eradication efforts a national priority, and encourage the full commitment and engagement of all actors in Afghan society in the struggle to eliminate this disease and to provide a polio-free future for all Afghan children.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Kofi A. Annan

His Excellency
Mr. Hâmid Karzai
President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Kabul
19 September 2006

Excellency,

The Secretary-General would be grateful if you could kindly forward the enclosed letter to His Excellency Mr. Hāmid Karzai, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

A copy of the letter is attached for your information.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Alicia Bárbara
Chef de Cabinet

His Excellency
Dr. Ravan A.G. Farhādi
Permanent Representative of Afghanistan
to the United Nations
New York
19 September 2006

Excellency,

The world is on the verge of finally eradicating polio. The number of cases of polio worldwide has decreased by more than 99 per cent since the launch of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) in 1988. Moreover, recent scientific advances have made it possible to protect future generations of children from this crippling disease.

Pakistan currently has the lowest number of polio cases among the four remaining polio-endemic countries. However, all countries remain at risk until polio is halted everywhere. Stopping polio transmission in Pakistan by the end of 2006, which is of vital strategic importance to the GPEI, will require the broad collaboration of all relevant national and international actors.

With the historic goal of eradicating polio within our grasp, I am writing to encourage your continued leadership in supporting efforts to eradicate this disease as a national priority. I ask that you engage with leaders and senior officials in Balochistan, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and the North Western Frontier Province to ensure that high-quality polio campaigns are carried out and that every child in these areas is vaccinated.

I am confident that, with your leadership, Pakistan can provide a polio-free future for all its children and I would like to assure you of the continued support of the United Nations in this regard.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Kofi A. Annan

His Excellency
General Pervez Musharraf
President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
Islamabad
19 September 2006

Excellency,

The Secretary-General would be grateful if you could kindly forward the enclosed letter to His Excellency General Pervez Musharraf, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

A copy of the letter is attached for your information.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Alicia Bárcena
Chef de Cabinet

His Excellency
Mr. Munir Akram
Permanent Representative of Pakistan
to the United Nations
New York
Excellency,

The world is on the verge of eradicating polio once and for all. The number of cases of polio worldwide has decreased by more than 99 per cent since the launch of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in 1988. Moreover, recent scientific advances have made it possible to protect future generations of children from this crippling disease.

Despite such progress, we must accept the fact that until polio is eradicated everywhere all countries will remain at risk. Angola had previously been effective in stopping polio transmission until the recent importation of the poliovirus from outside the country. I would therefore like to appeal for renewed efforts to arrest polio transmission in Angola and to stop its spread to the neighbouring countries of Namibia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With your personal commitment, and that of the United Nations, well-funded and high-quality campaigns against the spread of this disease are sure to be successful.

I am confident that, with your leadership, Angola will again be able to defeat polio. I assure you that you may count on the continued support of the United Nations in your efforts to provide a polio-free future for the children of Angola.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Kofi A. Annan

His Excellency
Mr. José Eduardo dos Santos
President of the Republic of Angola
Luanda
19 September 2006

Excellency,

The Secretary-General would be grateful if you could kindly forward the enclosed letter to His Excellency Mr. José Eduardo dos Santos, President of the Republic of Angola.

A copy of the letter is attached for your information.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Alicia Bárcena
Chef de Cabinet

His Excellency
Mr. Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Angola to the United Nations
New York
Alicia,

These letters have now been reviewed by Daniela, and Roberta has helped to "soften" the language.

I cannot find whether the SG has indeed approved to send these letters, but I do know it is an issue that he feels strongly about.

One option would be to pass them to him for his personal signature, since they are addressed to heads of State, at least one of which he is likely to see in the course of the week (Musharraf). Although it is a very busy week and I think we should minimize the number of letters for his personal signature this week...

18/9-05

Elpida,

Please check with Elizabeth W. and get her suggestions. The letters are ok but maybe SG wants to sign them personally.
Note to Ms. Alicia Barcena

Letters on Polio Eradication

As agreed following my note of 11 August (attached for ease of reference), please find attached for the Secretary-General’s review and clearance letters on polio to Afghanistan, Angola and Pakistan. I have also attached for ease of reference a copy of the letter to India, already signed by the Secretary-General.

Thank you.

Paolo Galli
14 September 2006

26-10222
Note to Ms. Barcena

Letters from the Secretary-General on Polio Eradication

1. In light of the recent new polio outbreak in western Uttar Pradesh, Dr. Heymann from WHO has recommended that the Secretary-General send a letter on this issue to the Prime Minister of India. The letter proposes that WHO convene a meeting in Geneva with Indian officials to discuss polio eradication. Dr. Heymann informed us that this suggestion came from the Indians themselves. Accordingly, please find attached a draft letter to the Prime Minister of India for the Secretary-General’s review and signature.

2. Dr. Heymann and his colleagues are also proposing that the Secretary-General sends letters to Afghanistan and Pakistan, two of the other endemic countries, as well as to Angola, which is, according to them, not taking sufficient action to combat the polio outbreak there. It is important to mention that Dr. Heymann feels that letters from the Secretary-General to these leaders would carry more weight than letters from the WHO Director-General a.i., given that WHO is “inter-regnum”. If the Secretary-General agrees, we can ask Dr. Heymann to proceed in preparing these letters. Please advise.

3. Along with India, Afghanistan and Pakistan, Nigeria is the only other polio endemic country. Dr. Heymann suggests that a letter to Nigeria would be less effective than a message delivered by the Secretary-General to President Obasanjo in person. We would therefore recommend that key messages on polio—which we will provide—be included in the talking points for the Secretary-General’s bilateral meeting with President Obasanjo during the General Assembly.

4. Dr. Heymann has also proposed that the Secretary-General prepare a short video message to all polio workers around the globe, thanking them and the polio eradication partners (UNICEF, Rotary etc.) for their efforts. WHO would work on a script and the idea is that the video would be sent to different locations where polio eradication efforts are underway. We think this gesture would be well received during the Secretary-General’s final months in office. If he agrees we can discuss the specifics with you. Please advise.

Many thanks.

Paolo Galbi
11 August 2006