

5<sup>th</sup> October 2011

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## **BRITAIN TO SECURE WORLD-WIDE ERADICATION OF WORM DISEASE**

Britain today announced it will provide major support to a new project that will make Guinea worm the second human disease ever to be eradicated in human history

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DFID, the Department for International Development: leading the British government's fight against world poverty. One in five people in the world today, over 1 billion people, live in poverty on less than one dollar a day.

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British funding would help train and supervise locals to track any outbreaks and ensure that those infected did not use stagnant communal water sources such as ponds and

reported 180,000 cases of the disease when it undertook its first national count in 1989. In July 2011, Ghana announced that it had stopped transmission of Guinea worm, meaning that no new cases of the disease had been reported for over a year. Once the disease cycle is broken the parasite cannot survive to infect others.

- Had the Guinea worm eradication campaign not been initiated in 1986, it is estimated that 3.5 million Guinea worm cases would have continued to occur annually. The Carter Center estimates that the eradication campaign has averted around 79.2 million cases, with the cost per case averted estimated at \$3.47
- Guinea worm is contracted through drinking water contaminated with microscopic Guinea worm larvae. About a year after drinking the contaminated water, a metre long spaghetti-like worm emerges from the afflicted person's body through a blister in the skin. If the worm comes into contact with water it ejects hundreds of thousands of larvae, which can trigger an unending cycle of the disease. There is no vaccine or medication for Guinea worm. The only treatment is manual extraction – a painful process that takes several weeks or months.
- A not-for-profit, nongovernmental organisation, the Carter Center has helped to improve life for people in more than 70 countries by resolving conflicts; advancing democracy, human rights, and economic opportunity; preventing diseases; improving mental health care; and teaching farmers in developing nations to increase crop production. The Carter Center was founded in 1982 by former US President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn, in partnership with Emory University, to advance peace and health worldwide. Please visit [www.cartercenter.org](http://www.cartercenter.org) to learn more about The Carter Center.

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