

***Statement from RI President Holger Knaack explaining position on Rotary Youth Exchange***

*“With the continued uncertainty of the pandemic and COVID-19 virus variants, inconsistent disease mitigation efforts, and the global imbalance of vaccine access – **the board has decided to suspend the Youth Exchange program through 30 June 2022.***

*The board’s decision was informed by scientific data, global health guidance and a number of factors required to guarantee a safe, equitable and quality experience. Careful consideration was also given to ease and availability of international travel, access to medical care and insurance coverage, school delays and closure, potential financial impact on participants’ families and Rotary volunteers.*

*Given the global imbalance of access to the COVID-19 vaccine and the financial impact of the pandemic, many areas of the world would be unable to participate in 2021. Moving forward with only the limited number of participating countries with access to the vaccine would contradict Rotary’s core value of fairness and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.”*