



## GAVI ALLIANCE ANNOUNCES

### DRAMATIC FUNDING BOOST FOR HIB VACCINE

Vaccine against *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) forms part of a US\$ 400 million commitment to bring new and under-used vaccines to 34 million poor children

**Cape Town, South Africa, 29 November 2007** - Immunisation efforts in 29 of the world's poorest countries received a substantial boost today when the GAVI Alliance approved programmes in the amount of US\$ 537.52 million for critically needed vaccines and health system support.

The largest proportion of funding, US\$ 369.98 million, will go to countries immunising against *Haemophilus influenzae* type b, which causes severe infections including meningitis and pneumonia. Today's approval means that 44 countries (64% of GAVI-targeted countries) will now be eligible to receive support for this vaccine – a 40% increase.

"This is wonderful news," said professor Eng Huot, Cambodia's Secretary of State for Health. "On average, 20% of children who contract Hib meningitis die. The decisions taken today by GAVI give us hope that we can defeat this awful killer."

Hib kills 400,000 children aged under five every year, most of them in the developing world. It is also responsible for approximately 3 million cases of serious illnesses resulting in long term consequences such as deafness, learning disabilities, paralysis and mental retardation. The WHO recommends that all countries adopt the Hib vaccine into routine child immunisation. By the end of 2006, however, only 108 countries provided Hib vaccination.

GAVI's commitment to helping introduce the easy-to-administer pentavalent vaccine has played a significant part in the huge increase in demand for the Hib vaccine. Pentavalent 5-in-1 vaccine immunises against Hib as well as four other diseases in just one shot: diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus and hepatitis B. By the end of 2007, GAVI will have devoted US \$181 million to secure supplies of this vaccine.

The popularity of this combination vaccine has also increased the uptake of the hepatitis B vaccine. All but two countries of the 69 GAVI-eligible countries now receive funding for hepatitis B vaccine.

Support of US\$ 28.59 million was also approved for the first time for two new-generation vaccines against rotavirus and pneumococcal disease. These

diseases kill an estimated 1.5 million children every year in the world's poorest regions. Rotavirus causes diarrhoeal disease and pneumococcus is a major cause of pneumonia, meningitis and sepsis (blood poisoning). The introduction of the rotavirus vaccine will be funded in Bolivia, Guyana and Honduras and the introduction of pneumococcal vaccine will be supported in Nicaragua, Guyana and Honduras. The approval marks the beginning of a total US\$ 200 million GAVI investment directed at fighting these two diseases.

To build the long-term sustainability of immunisation programmes, all countries that receive GAVI vaccine introduction support share the cost of these vaccines. The 20 countries eligible to receive this type of support today have agreed to add US\$ 33.58 million from their own funds to GAVI's US\$ 399.62 million.

The national health systems of 13 of the world's poorest countries are also eligible to receive US\$ 137.9 million as a result of the board approvals. This new funding is designed to address barriers and weaknesses in health programmes and systems that impede sustainable immunisation coverage. Barriers include inadequate transport and infrastructure, lack of skilled workers and professionals, weak information systems and technology failures.

The new funding is a portion of an initial US\$ 500 million investment in health system strengthening that GAVI committed in 2005 following a study into how to better sustain immunisation programmes.

"There are a multitude of obstacles and bottlenecks that can prevent children from receiving vaccines, even in well-funded immunisation programmes" said GAVI Executive Secretary Julian Lob-Levyt. "A shortage of transport, refrigeration and storage or a lack of training for health workers can seriously hinder effective vaccine delivery and coverage. GAVI is now addressing this need."

Along with the commitments it made today, the Boards also celebrated the disbursements made by the International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm), a multilateral development institution created in 2006 that, through an innovative bond offering, was able to raise nearly US\$ 1 billion in funding for health and immunisation programmes. After issuing its first bond in November 2006, IFFIm was able to double the resources GAVI has been able to allocate in 2007: \$ 945.6 million compared to US\$ 418.3 million in 2006.

"The vaccines and good health that are regularly enjoyed by children in the north should equally be enjoyed by children in the south," said GAVI Fund Chair Graça Machel. "The decisions taken today and the ongoing hard work being undertaken by the GAVI Alliance partners bring us so much closer to providing just that."

To date, GAVI has approved US\$3.55 billion's worth of support to 76 of the world's poorest countries.

*Ends*

**The GAVI Alliance** [www.gavialliance.org](http://www.gavialliance.org)

The GAVI Alliance is a public-private partnership of major stakeholders in vaccines and immunisation. It includes developing country and donor governments, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank, the vaccine industry in both industrialised and developing countries, research and technical agencies, NGOs, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other private philanthropists. WHO projects that GAVI support will have prevented more than 2.8 million deaths by the end of 2007.

GAVI's efforts are critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goal on child health, which calls for reducing childhood mortality by two thirds by 2015. Of the 10 million children who die before reaching their fifth birthday every year, 2.5 million die from diseases that could be prevented with currently available or new vaccines.

**IFFIm** [www.iff-immunisation.org](http://www.iff-immunisation.org)

The International Finance Facility for Immunisation Company (“IFFIm”) was established as a multilateral development institution to accelerate the availability of funds to be used for health and immunisation programmes through the GAVI Alliance in some 70 of the poorest countries around the world.

An anticipated IFFIm funding of US\$4 billion is expected to help prevent five million child deaths between 2006 and 2015, and more than five million future adult deaths by protecting more than 500 million children in immunization campaigns and strengthening national health systems.

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