

Developing Countries Vaccine Manufacturers Network (DCVMN)

Inaugural Keynote Lecture

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Dr Isabella Danel, Deputy Director, PAHO

Members of the Developing Countries Vaccine Manufacturers Network

Representatives of Sinergium Biotech

Other distinguished participants from the international vaccine community....

On behalf of my organization's Director, Dr. Carissa Etienne, it is a pleasure and an honor for me to participate in this 17th Annual General Meeting of the DCVMN, which is taking place here in the Americas for the second time. The use of vaccines to prevent infectious diseases is one of the most cost-effective health interventions ever developed, and is one of the greatest public health successes of the last century. No one knows this better than the countries and territories of the Americas, which have led the way in protecting their populations against vaccine-preventable diseases.

As Dr. Etienne mentioned in her video message, the Region of the Americas has a proud history of public health achievements, many of which were made possible

by vaccines. Taken as a whole, our region's achievements in fighting vaccine-preventable diseases are the result of a combination of efforts.

First a strong commitment to both maintaining and extending the reach of National Immunization Programs within the public health sector. This includes using technical evidence for national decision-making on vaccine introductions.

Second, we have worked to broaden and strengthen National Regulatory Pathways. Third, sustained national financing has been secured through immunization budget lines and legislation. And finally accurate forecasting of national demand for vaccines means you, the DCVMN members, can plan production with confidence which ensures the timely availability of vaccines.

Another key contributor to our region's success in immunization is the PAHO Revolving Fund. This unique regional mechanism facilitates the consolidation of national demand forecasting from 41 countries and territories, offers a line of credit for participating countries, and—in coordination with you as manufacturers—ensures the quality and availability of safe and effective vaccines, engages in post-marketing surveillance, and ensures your timely payments. More insights on the success of this mechanism and its vision for the future will be offered later in today's agenda.

Just last month, at our annual meeting of ministers of health, we announced another critical milestone, **the elimination of measles** from the Americas. This latest achievement culminates a 22-year effort involving mass vaccination against measles and the introduction of the MMR vaccine into the routine immunization programs throughout the Americas. As Dr. Etienne described this historic accomplishment, *“it is proof of the remarkable success that can be achieved when countries work together in solidarity toward a common goal”*.

The credit for this achievement belongs to our member countries’ national immunization programs coupled with PAHO’s critical regional coordination efforts, and there is no question that without the timely supply of quality MR and MMR vaccines by DCVMN members it would not have been possible.

However, your contributions to public health progress in the Americas extend beyond the timely supply of quality vaccines for measles & rubella elimination. I’d also like to highlight the role that DCVMN members are playing in supporting the uptake of seasonal influenza vaccine in the region. Last year, 25 of 30 countries and territories in the Americas protected their populations with seasonal influenza vaccine produced by DCVMN members. **So thank you all!** (Pause to allow clapping)

But there are many additional opportunities for expanding the market for your products in the Americas. Did you know that:

- 34 countries and territories have introduced the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV),
- 18 countries and territories have introduced the rotavirus vaccine and
- 23 countries and territories have introduced the vaccine against human papilloma virus (HPV).

These vaccines have already helped countries reduce mortality and morbidity from the targeted diseases. Nonetheless we are facing substantial challenges due to the high prices of these vaccines and constrained national budgetary environments. I should mention that for the first time in the 40-year history of our regional immunization program, one of our national programs made the very difficult decision earlier this year not to prioritize the purchase of a new vaccine—the pneumococcal conjugated vaccine, PCV—as a result of severe budgetary constraints. Despite our negotiations with multinational suppliers, the price of the vaccine was prohibitive in this instance.

This is where DCVMN members can step in. The fast-track development of one or more of these vaccines by DCVMN manufacturers could enhance the

sustainability of our region's national immunization programs by reducing costs and permitting our countries to expand protection of their populations through the inclusion of additional vaccines.

Our region would welcome your help and innovation to ensure the timely availability of newer quality vaccines such as those I've already mentioned, as well as others, particularly vaccines with a fragile supply base such as yellow fever and IPV. We also need a less reactogenic and more effective pertussis vaccine. And we need your help with vaccines in the development pipeline, such as malaria, dengue - and now Zika, which is present in virtually all countries of the Americas and has tragic consequences for pregnant women, their infants and their families. We need an affordable Zika vaccine as soon as possible.

To this end we would encourage suppliers who are thinking about technology transfer arrangements to consider the Region as a whole, and not just the national markets.

To sum up, we see the challenge for PAHO and our Member States going forward as that of finding alternative sources of life-saving vaccines, promoting competition and transparent markets, and adopting strategies that guarantee

manufacturers find vibrant commercial opportunities while offering vaccines that are quality assured, effective and affordable for all.

Over the past 5 years DCVMN members have expanded their offerings in the Americas and your products bring even greater value to our countries. In 2015 DCVMN vaccines represented 74% of the total volume of 250 million doses that PAHO's Revolving Fund procured on behalf of our Member States.

We believe there is potential for continuing growth for your vaccines in this market. We welcome your innovations that will contribute to this additional growth and we commit to continued dialogue and engagement in this process to ensure timely availability and access of vaccines for all.

With that, I would like to thank all of you —on behalf of the ministries of health of PAHO's Member States — for your ongoing contributions to our Region's national immunization programs. Thank you so much.