

Plenary Opening Session, Seoul, 26th September 2017

Opening speech - DCVMN President, Mahima Datla



Dear DCVMN members, participants and friends

Good morning!

It's an honor to welcome you to the 18th AGM of the DCVMN and to Seoul. First and foremost, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to S K Chemicals for the tremendous efforts in hosting this event, and IVI for all the support they have provided towards the organization of this event. I would also like to extend our vote of thanks to our guests from WHO, UNICEF, PAHO, GAVI, BMGF, CEPI, PATH, and many important organizations and partners, for taking the time to attend this event.

DCVMN has made rapid progress in the last 17 years and the attendance at this event is a testament to that. This time we are witnessing a great participation with about 270 delegates from about 40 countries. This includes over 140 representatives from DCVMN member companies. We are thankful for the great response and show of support.

The vaccines industry has seen a rapid transformation and rapid growth in the last two decades. The growth largely catalyzed by a greater effort on a global scale in the form of GAVI. With the help of GAVI, global uptake of new vaccines and coverage rates have risen significantly. Having said that, even today, vaccine preventable diseases account for an unacceptable amount of deaths in children under the age of 5 and this implies the need for new interventions to tackle this problem. Innovation is very much needed to solve for the practical challenges with respect to last mile delivery. At the same time, there is a need to keep pushing the pedal on awareness campaigns with greater political commitment to keep trust in immunization at the highest level.

I would like to take some time to underline achievements of some of our members. Over the last one year three new vaccines from the DCVMs received WHO PQ. These include Green Cross's Quadrivalent seasonal flu vaccine, Eubiologics' oral cholera vaccine (OCV) in plastic containers and Bharat Biotech's bi OPV vaccine. With the addition of three more vaccines, the number of PQed vaccines or products has increased to 64 to date. We would like to congratulate CNBG for receiving approval and production license for sabin IPV recently. We would also like to congratulate BioNet for receiving Thai FDA's approval for the world's only recombinant monovalent acellular pertussis vaccine. Please join me in applause for these achievements.

Needless to say, over the last decade or so, DCVMs have played a crucial role in improving both access and supply security. But, sustainability of DCVMs is critical to continuing to ensure the same. Increased competition over the last few years has led to substantial value erosion for many organizations. Undoubtedly this overcapacity in supply has helped increase the accessibility for many countries. However, stakeholders such as procurement agencies and governments need to

play a more responsible role in managing a fine balance when making tradeoffs between the short term affordability & long term sustainability. It's important to remember that while under-capacity threatens affordability and therefore access for countries, over-capacity also threatens the very sustainability and viability of manufacturers. DCVMN will strive to work with the relevant stakeholders to advocate for this balance and over the next couple of days I hope we get a chance to discuss this further.

What we also look forward to discussing is how DCVMs might contribute towards global pandemic preparedness efforts. Outbreaks of epidemics in recent years have highlighted our ill-preparedness for a rapid response and this is a serious global challenge. A number of initiatives being led by WHO as well as by CEPI are bringing together industry experts and manufacturers to create the necessary framework on identifying risks and have mitigation strategies in place. DCVMs can make a strong contribution as many of us have relevant products in our portfolios and are working with stakeholders to set up a framework for rapid development, capacity planning and inventory holding strategies.

We have a packed agenda for the next 2 days and I hope all of us will utilize the time to the fullest to challenge assumptions and each other to come up with a common agenda. After all, everyone in this room is here for one reason alone which is to reach all the children across the globe such that no child is lost for want of immunization and that we realize this dream in a future not too far away.

I wish you all meaningful days at the DCVMN AGM and thank you!