

## PRESS ROOM

PRESS RELEASES AND STATEMENTS

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### **Global Fund for Children's Vaccine Approve Support to Eight More Countries; Five Year Commitment Now Exceeds \$250 Million**

The Netherlands announces US\$100 million contribution towards children's vaccine effort

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NOORDWIJK, the Netherlands -- The Global Fund for Children's Vaccines (Global Fund) today announced grants of

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more than US\$100 million over five years to improve immunization programs in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin

America. Countries approved in this round include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Liberia, Pakistan Rwanda, Sao Tome, and Uganda. Coupled with a disbursement in September of \$150 million over five years, these funds will enable countries to immunize millions of children against hepatitis B and other deadly diseases.

The announcement was made as more than 300 vaccine advocates from industrialized and developing countries gathered in the Netherlands on 20-21 November for the first biannual meeting of the partners of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), a coalition of public and private institutions.

The Netherlands' Minister of Health, Welfare, and Sport, Dr. Els Borst-Eilers, opened the meeting with the announcement that the Dutch government would contribute 250 million guilders (approximately US\$100 million) over five years to support GAVI and the Global Fund in their mission to strengthen immunization services in low-income countries.

"The Global Fund specifically targets the 74 poorest countries of the world—with the help of GAVI, we can also provide training, infrastructure, and skills to help them make their programs sustainable over the long term," said Jacques-François Martin, President of the Global Fund. "We are proud to count the Netherlands as one of our most active partners. The announcement today of their generous commitment is great news for the world's children. It is a very wise investment in the future."

At present, vaccines save about three million lives per year. However, GAVI estimates that another three million die because they lack access to immunization. Measles—a disease virtually unseen in rich countries today—kills nearly one million children every year. Liver disease caused by hepatitis B claims another 900,000 lives annually.

The Global Fund was launched in November 1999. To date it has secured over \$1 billion, with

commitments from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the governments of Norway, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The Global Fund award process is designed to efficiently channel resources to developing country health systems. Approximately 98% of current Global Fund resources will go directly to national immunization programs.

More countries are expected to submit proposals to the Global Fund for the next review in January 2001. Countries will receive financial and technical assistance either to strengthen basic immunization systems or to introduce newer, under-used vaccines such as hepatitis B and Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib). Some countries will receive support in both areas. Initial grants of vaccines and funding are made based on a careful review of the country applications, which require comprehensive five-year plans demonstrating increased government investment (and decreased external aid) over time. Subsequent grants will be made depending on the country's ability to implement the plan and meet its goals.

The Global Fund for Children's Vaccines, a new financing resource that was created in 1999, provides financial support directly to low-income countries to strengthen their immunization services and to purchase new and under-used vaccines. The Global Fund received an initial \$750 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and has since received support from governments and other donors. In the future, Global Fund resources may also be used to accelerate the development of vaccines for diseases responsible for significant mortality in developing countries, such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and acute respiratory diseases. While the Global Fund has its own Board and management for fiduciary and fundraising responsibilities, decisions about programs to receive support will be made on the recommendation of GAVI.

The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) is a coalition of organizations formed in 1999 in response to stagnating global immunization rates and widening disparities in vaccine access among industrialized and developing countries. The GAVI partners include: national governments, the Gates Children's Vaccine Program at PATH, the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Associations (IFPMA), research and public health institutions, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank Group and the World Health Organization (WHO).

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