

April 2005

The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) and The Vaccine Fund

The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) is an historic alliance of public and private sector partners committed to a mission of saving children's lives and protecting people's health through the widespread use of vaccines.

GAVI was launched in 2000 to increase immunization rates and reverse widening global disparities in access to vaccines. Governments in industrialized and developing countries, UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank, non-governmental organizations, foundations, vaccine manufacturers, and public health and research institutions work together as partners in the Alliance to achieve common immunization goals, in the recognition that only through a strong and united effort can much higher levels of support for global immunization be generated.

Key to achieving the goals of the Alliance is the need for a dramatic increase in new funding for immunization. Building on the resources already provided by individual partners in the Alliance, GAVI partners created The Vaccine Fund to help fill critical gaps in the overall global effort and to maintain a significant source of additional financial support from both public and private donors. In furtherance of GAVI's goals, resources from The Vaccine Fund are used to help strengthen health and immunization services, accelerate access to selected vaccines and new vaccine technologies - especially vaccines that are new or under-used, and improve injection safety.

In addition to substantial funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The Vaccine Fund has been financed by ten governments to date – Canada, Denmark, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States – as well as the European Union and private contributors. The Vaccine Fund provides multi-year grants to over 70 of the world's poorest countries (those with a per capita Gross National Income (GNI) of less than US\$1000 per year). Grants are made based on a rigorous application process in which country proposals are reviewed by a panel of independent experts drawn from a wide geographic base.

As of February 2005, GAVI and The Vaccine Fund had raised almost US\$1.3 billion, received an additional US\$ 1.19 billion in pledges and disbursed over US\$ 530 million.

The achievements of the Alliance

In the first four years of its existence, the Alliance has helped to increase significantly the number of children worldwide who have access to immunization. By end-2003, support from GAVI and The Vaccine Fund had ensured that:

- an additional 6 million children were reached with routine immunization¹;
- over 42 million children were immunized against hepatitis B;
- almost 5 million children were immunized against *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib);
- over 3 million children were immunized against yellow fever.

As a result, it is estimated that by end-2003, over 670,000 premature deaths had been prevented among the children born in 2001-2003². Some of those deaths would have occurred in childhood and others (e.g., from hepatitis B) in the most productive adult years.

The Alliance has also pioneered a number of truly innovative approaches to international development aid:

- GAVI's country application and review processes have created high levels of demand and a rapid scale-up of national programmes.
- Financial incentives for good performance puts the emphasis on results, allowing countries to make their own decisions on how best to use the funds to achieve these. They also encourage immunization of children who are traditionally harder to reach.
- New financial planning tools are helping countries mobilize new resources and reduce aid dependency. By establishing initial funding and a market for new vaccines in developing countries, the Alliance encourages more manufacturers to enter the market, stimulating competition and a reduction in prices.

The structure of the Alliance

- The high-level GAVI Board sets the Alliance's strategic vision and direction, provides high-level policy decisions and approves support for country immunization programmes. The GAVI Executive Committee and Working Group oversee the development and implementation of the GAVI work plan. The Alliance is supported by a small secretariat.
- The Vaccine Fund has a board of prominent individuals largely devoted to advocacy and resource mobilization, as well as a small Executive Committee and a secretariat.
- A decision has now been taken to join the two secretariats under one single leader.
- In countries, GAVI is represented by its partners. National Inter-agency Coordinating Committees (ICCs) provide a forum to facilitate cooperation between governments and their external partners in strengthening national programmes.

¹ Measured by the number of children under one year of age fully immunized against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTP3 coverage).

² WHO estimate. Based on projections of the number of future deaths averted from hepatitis B, Hib disease and pertussis. It has not been possible to estimate the additional number of deaths averted through GAVI support for immunization against yellow fever or measles.