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Contacts:

Patti Pierson, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
Phone: +1.206.709.3400 / Email: [media@gatesfoundation.org](mailto:media@gatesfoundation.org)

Anne Winter, Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization  
Phone: +41.22.909.5449 / Email: [awinter@unicef.org](mailto:awinter@unicef.org)

Jean-Pierre Le Calvez, The Vaccine Fund  
Phone: +33.4.7256.4506 / Email: [jplecalvez@vaccinefund.org](mailto:jplecalvez@vaccinefund.org)

Torbjørn G. Eriksen, press secretary to Jens Stoltenberg  
Phone: +47 995 419 11 / Email: [tge@stortinget.no](mailto:tge@stortinget.no)

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**Gates Foundation, Norway Contribute \$1 Billion to Increase Child Immunization in  
Developing Countries**

*\$8-\$12 billion needed for vaccine programs through 2015; donors called on to address critical  
funding gap*

SEATTLE – The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced a grant of \$750 million, and Norway committed \$290 million, to support the work of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI). In making the announcement today, Bill Gates called on other donors to address the major funding gap for children's immunization programs in developing countries.

GAVI was launched in 2000 to address the fact that more than two million people in developing countries die needlessly each year because they do not receive the immunizations that are taken for granted in the industrialized world.

Since its inception, GAVI has helped prevent more than 670,000 deaths in the world's poorest countries by improving access to basic children's vaccines, accelerating introduction of new vaccines, and strengthening vaccine delivery systems.

"Supporting children's immunization is undoubtedly the best investment we've ever made. In just five years, GAVI's efforts have saved hundreds of thousands of children's lives, and its work in the coming years will save millions more," said Bill Gates, co-founder of the Gates Foundation. "But today's commitments are only a down payment. Rich countries can and should increase immunization funding to give children in developing countries a better shot at a healthy life."

Melinda Gates, co-founder of the Gates Foundation, also emphasized the urgent need for more resources for children's immunization. An estimated 27 million children in the developing world still aren't immunized each year; in 2002, this resulted in 2.1 million deaths. WHO estimates that \$8-\$12 billion will be needed from both donor and developing country governments from 2005-15 to immunize children in the poorest countries with vaccines available today; more will be needed to introduce new vaccines now in the development pipeline.

“Today, a child’s access to life-saving vaccines too often depends on where he or she lives in the world, and that’s unacceptable,” Mrs. Gates said. “Vaccines taken for granted in rich countries still don’t get to millions of children in the developing world. This is a solvable problem – it’s time for donors, both public and private, to dramatically step up their efforts to close the immunization gap.”

The Gates Foundation made an initial grant of \$750 million in 1999 to The Vaccine Fund, GAVI’s financing arm. Today’s grant to The Vaccine Fund, a 10-year commitment, brings the foundation’s total support for childhood immunization to more than \$1.5 billion. The two grants are the largest the foundation has made to date.

### **Norway, Other Governments Increase Contributions to GAVI**

The Parliament of Norway also announced today new funding to support GAVI, pledging a total of \$290 million from 2005 through 2010 – nearly \$50 million (300 million kroner) each year. This contribution brings Norway’s total commitment to GAVI to date to \$400 million.

“Immunizing children is one of the most important and cost-effective development investments donor governments can make,” said Jens Stoltenberg, Vaccine Fund board member and former Prime Minister of Norway, who negotiated Norway’s first grant to GAVI. “Children must have a healthy start if we hope to reduce poverty and build strong economies.”

Other governments pledging new support for GAVI in the past year include the United States, Sweden, Denmark, and Luxembourg. Since 1999, GAVI and The Vaccine Fund have raised more than \$2.3 billion from public and private donors, including the contributions announced today.

Developing countries are also increasing their own funding for immunization. A recent review of 22 GAVI-funded countries found that they increased investment in immunization by an average of 13% in the first several years after receiving GAVI support.

### **Grants Will Expand Global Access to Vaccines**

GAVI will use the funds announced today to support national immunization programs in 72 of the world’s poorest countries. GAVI funding will be used to:

- *Strengthen immunization services* needed to deliver basic vaccines, including those for diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), measles, tuberculosis, and polio
- *Introduce underused vaccines* in areas where they are urgently needed, including vaccines for hepatitis B, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), and yellow fever
- *Accelerate the development and introduction of new vaccines* in the pipeline, including vaccines for rotavirus, meningitis, and pneumococcus -- diseases that caused 2.1 million deaths in 2002
- *Ensure immunization safety* by widely distributing single-use syringes

“Our goal is to provide every child with life-saving immunizations,” said Julian Lob-Levyt, executive secretary of GAVI and incoming chief executive officer of The Vaccine Fund. “GAVI’s experience shows that goal is achievable – vaccine programs work in every country, even those facing natural disasters and armed conflict.”

Over the past five years, GAVI has committed more than \$1 billion to immunize children in developing countries. As a result of this funding:

- 4 million more children have been protected against diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis
- 42 million more children have been vaccinated against hepatitis B
- 5 million more children have been vaccinated against Hib
- 3 million more children have been vaccinated against yellow fever
- 991 million single-use syringes have been distributed to ensure safe vaccinations

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. WHO estimates that of the more than 10 million children who died before reaching their fifth birthday in 2002, 1.4 million died from vaccine-preventable diseases, and another 1.1 million died from diseases for which vaccines will soon be available. The need for greater immunization will be discussed when the United Nations reviews progress toward the Millennium Development Goals later this year.

GAVI has been widely hailed as an innovative model for improving global health. GAVI coordinates the efforts of many partners, including:

- *Developing country governments*, who determine their own immunization priorities and how to allocate GAVI resources; GAVI's performance-based funding ensures a strong focus on results.
- *International agencies* including UNICEF and WHO, who work with developing countries to improve the safety and efficiency of national immunization programs, help track disease rates, and predict vaccine supply needs.
- *Private vaccine makers*, who ensure a reliable supply of life-saving vaccines. GAVI's guarantee of predictable, long-term markets encourages greater competition – leading to reduced prices – and stimulates additional investment in R&D for urgently needed vaccines.

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The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to promote greater equity in four areas: global health, education, public libraries, and support for at-risk families in Washington state and Oregon. The Seattle-based foundation joins local, national, and international partners to ensure that advances in these areas reach those who need them most. The foundation is led by Bill Gates's father, William H. Gates Sr., and Patty Stonesifer.

The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) is a public-private partnership focused on increasing access to vaccines among children in poor countries. Partners include national governments, UNICEF, WHO, The World Bank, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the vaccine industry, public health institutions, and NGOs. The Vaccine Fund, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, is the financing resource created to support the GAVI immunization goals, providing financial support directly to low-income countries to strengthen their health delivery and immunization services and to purchase new and under-used vaccines.

On the Internet:

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, [www.gatesfoundation.org](http://www.gatesfoundation.org)

Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, [www.vaccinealliance.org](http://www.vaccinealliance.org)

The Vaccine Fund, [www.vaccinefund.org](http://www.vaccinefund.org)