STATEMENT

Immunisation one key intervention to end two million preventable child deaths each year

*GAVI welcomes WHO and UNICEF integrated Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Pneumonia and Diarrhoea*

**Geneva** (**12 April**) – Pneumonia and diarrhoea together account for nearly one-third of all under-five child deaths in developing countries. Evidence shows that children are dying from these preventable diseases because effective interventions are not reaching them or not provided equitably across all communities.

“We need to integrate the life-saving immunisation that GAVI supports with treatment to prevent and control pneumonia and diarrhoea,” said Dr Seth Berkley, CEO of the GAVI Alliance. “Together with our partners, we can end the preventable deaths of more than two million children a year by 2025.”

GAVI welcomes the integrated Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Pneumonia and Diarrhoea (GAPPD) [link] developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, two major GAVI Alliance partners, and released today in a special Lancet series [link].

“Immunisation against pneumococcus, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib), measles and whooping cough (pertussis) is the most effective way to prevent pneumonia, and rotavirus vaccination is a key measure to prevent diarrhoea.” said Dr Berkley. “This global action plan addresses the critical need for a coordinated approach that integrates the vaccination that GAVI funds with other prevention and treatment methods.”

The GAPPD highlights GAVI’s efforts to accelerate affordable access and sustain implementation of vaccines against the major causes of pneumoniaand diarrhoea. It also notes that GAVI’s support for health system strengthening and new vaccine introductions can help countries provide health worker training, monitoring and evaluation and supply chain management.

To date, GAVI has helped 24 countries immunise children with pneumococcal vaccines, 13 countries with rotavirus vaccines, and GAVI is also stepping up its support for measles vaccines. For pneumococcal and rotavirus, this means over an additional 13 million and five million children respectively, have been immunised. By 2014, all 73 GAVI supported countries will have introduced pentavalent vaccines.

While there has been good progress in introducing new vaccines, increasing current vaccine coverage remains a challenge in some countries. “The GAPPD highlights the clear need for countries and development partners to extend their commitment to immunisation if we are to achieve its ambitious goals,” added Dr Berkley. “GAVI is strengthening its efforts in countries where immunisation coverage is below 70%, and in those with particularly serious inequities in access.” GAVI aims to ensure that the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations benefit from immunisation.

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GAVI Alliance

The GAVI Alliance is a public-private partnership committed to saving children’s lives and protecting people’s health by increasing access to immunisation in developing countries. The Alliance brings together developing country and donor governments, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank, the vaccine industry, technical agencies, civil society, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other private sector partners. GAVI uses innovative finance mechanisms, including co-financing by recipient countries, to secure sustainable funding and adequate supply of quality vaccines. Since 2000, GAVI has financed the immunisation of an additional 370 million children and prevented more than 5.5 million premature deaths. Learn more at [www.gavialliance.org](http://www.gavialliance.org) and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.

GAVI is funded by governments [Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States], the European Commission, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, as well as private and corporate partners [Absolute Return for Kids, Anglo American plc., The Children’s Investment Fund Foundation, Comic Relief, Dutch Postcode Lottery, His Highness Sheikh Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, JP Morgan, “la Caixa” Foundation, LDS Charities and Vodafone].

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