

## Kenya marks the global roll out of pneumococcal vaccine against the world's leading cause of child death



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*The pneumococcal vaccine launch ceremony in Nairobi Kenya. A celebratory cold box carrying vaccine vials (left) and a nurse giving one of the first shots to an infant (right).*

Hundreds of infants in Kenya received their first shots against pneumococcal disease on the 14th February at a special event to celebrate the global roll-out of vaccines targeting the world's biggest child killer – pneumonia.

Kenya's President Mwai Kibaki joined parents, health workers, ambassadors, and donors in Nairobi to witness children being immunised as part of the Government of Kenya's formal introduction of pneumococcal vaccine in its routine immunisation programme for all children.

Kenya is the first African country to roll-out this pneumococcal conjugate vaccine which has been specially-tailored to meet the needs of children in developing countries. It is supported by GAVI (The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation) and brings together governments, UNICEF, WHO, and other key players in global health.

GAVI has committed to support the introduction of pneumococcal vaccines in 19 developing countries within a year and, if it gets sufficient funding from its donors, plans to roll them out to more than 40 countries by 2015.

'The roll-out of the pneumococcal vaccine has become a reality across the world allowing developing country governments to reduce deaths and enable millions of children to grow up healthy,' said Helen Evans, interim CEO of the GAVI Alliance. 'Routine vaccination is one of the most cost-effective public health investments a government can make and we are counting on our donors to continue their strong backing for our life-saving mission.'

GAVI needs an additional US\$3.7 billion over the next 5 years to continue its support for immunisation in the

world's poorest countries and introduce new and under-used vaccines, including the pneumococcal vaccine and the rotavirus vaccine which tackles diarrhoea – the second biggest killer of children under 5.

'The rapid roll-out of new-generation pneumococcal vaccines shows how innovation and technology can be harnessed, at affordable prices, to save lives in the developing world. The payback, as measured by reduced childhood mortality, will be enormous,' said Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization.

The roll-out of these pneumococcal vaccines in the developing world has been made possible through an innovative finance mechanism pioneered by GAVI called the Advance Market Commitment (AMC).

With US\$1.5 billion from Italy, the United Kingdom, Canada, the Russian Federation, Norway, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and a commitment of US\$ 1.3 billion from GAVI, the AMC allowed the acceleration of production capacity from the two manufacturers contracted so far. This is securing the supply of pneumococcal vaccines within a year following the introduction of those vaccines in Europe and in the United States and at a fraction of the price charged in rich countries.

'The Advance Market Commitment accelerated the introduction of the pneumococcal vaccine in the poorest countries of the world,' said Dr Tachi Yamada, President of the Global Health Program at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. 'This innovative finance mechanism is proof that public-private relationships are working to deliver life-saving vaccines to children as quickly as possible.'