

- Sanofi Pasteur Statement of Support for the GAVI Alliance -

GAVI has been instrumental in accelerating access to life-saving vaccines in the world's poorest countries. It has also succeeded in putting vaccines at the center of the global healthcare and equity agenda. By gathering all essential partners, including the vaccine industry, around the table, GAVI has instilled a collaborative spirit and a common, shared vision among stakeholders. While the implementation of this vision may be facing financial strain today, GAVI's vision remains, rightly so, ambitious and focused on the long term.

Pentavalent, Pneumococcal and Rotavirus vaccines are top of GAVI's agenda today but, if the vision can be preserved, tomorrow could bring vaccines to protect against cervical cancer (caused by Human Papilloma Virus), Dengue or Malaria. By maintaining this long term perspective, GAVI can continue to shape markets and enable industrial partners, such as Sanofi Pasteur, the vaccines division of Sanofi-aventis Group, to invest in vaccines for those least able to afford them. Until the advent of GAVI, Sanofi Pasteur's ability to research, develop and manufacture vaccines, specifically for developing countries, was significantly limited by the uncertainty of their future use in low-income countries and therefore the uncertainty over the return on the huge investment required to develop new vaccines. GAVI's collaborative spirit succeeded these challenges in achieving a common public health vision.

Shaping Markets by Forecasting Demand

It is critical to the vaccine industry to be able to forecast vaccine demand. This allows us to plan vaccine production in the knowledge that we can re-coup the significant investment that this entails. GAVI's ability to more accurately predict the vaccine needs of the poorest countries has enabled Sanofi Pasteur, and other producers, to scale their production accordingly. The results are; a vaccine market which attracts multiple manufacturers and a maximum benefit to vaccine prices. We highlight below some examples of how GAVI has positively impacted Sanofi Pasteur's ability to meet the public health needs of low income countries:

Investing in Underutilized Vaccines

Prior to the launch of GAVI in 2000 yellow fever vaccine demand was unpredictable and unstable. The vaccine was used primarily in response to epidemics. Vaccine manufacturers were generally not able to respond in time with sufficient capacity to meet demands when they materialized. Thanks to the longer term view provided by GAVI, Sanofi Pasteur and other manufacturers invested in capacity, and additional suppliers entered the market. Several countries now have routine immunization programs and vaccine supply is more reliable and secure than before GAVI. The Yellow Fever vaccination programs have yielded tangible public health benefits in the region, interrupting and preventing several outbreaks, saving lives and preventing exposure to risk in millions of persons. The control of yellow fever in West Africa is a clear example of GAVI's success.

Investing in Vaccines for the Future

To its credit, GAVI has looked beyond the immediate and the short-term and articulated a vision and a strategy for the future. In anticipation, Sanofi Pasteur and other producers alike are investing in Pentavalent, Pneumococcal, Rotavirus, Typhoid, Japanese Encephalitis and HPV vaccines. And thanks to GAVI's investments in accelerating adoption of these vaccines, the time to introduce these and other vaccines in the world's poorest countries has been and will be significantly reduced, and fewer lives will be lost.

Building Capacity

A major obstacle to accelerating the use of new and underused vaccines, in the poorest countries, is a lack of infrastructure, technical ability and experience with implementing immunization programs. GAVI has made significant investments to address these obstacles. Sanofi Pasteur for its part has for the last eight years provided an unrestricted grant to EPIVAC, a professional training program for public health officers in West Africa. This has led to an inter-university diploma awarded by the universities of Cocody-Abidjan (Ivory Coast) and Paris-Dauphine (France). Recently the EPIVAC Network (REI) was launched, aiming to bring together the graduates of the EPIVAC program for best-practice sharing and continuous education in vaccination and logistics. One of GAVI's great successes has been to mobilize stakeholders, like ourselves, to contribute to the enhancement of capacity of low income countries.

In Summary

GAVI has created an unprecedented partnership of the key stakeholders in immunization. In doing so GAVI has saved the lives of millions, with both existing and new vaccines. To continue building on these impressive and noble achievements, GAVI needs to constantly return to the principles of the alliance. It is by engaging with its partners, including vaccine producers, policy makers and funders that a shared global vision will be built and brought to fruition. A critical element is the alignment of responsibilities among partners, clarifying timelines and action plans for strengthening inadequate health systems, and ensuring that adequate funds and financing are made available to continuously improve access.

Sanofi Pasteur, who's vision is a world in which no one suffers or dies from a vaccine-preventable disease, is more than ever committed to GAVI and its partners to protect lives against vaccine preventable diseases. We are proud to play our part in producing this most cost effective of healthcare interventions, and believe that the significant gains in public health of the past decade, and those to come, would not have been achievable without GAVI.