



# WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

EXECUTIVE BOARD  
105th Session  
Agenda item 3.5

EB105/43  
25 January 2000

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## Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization

### Report by the Secretariat

1. Resolution WHA44.4 requests the Director-General *inter alia* to keep the Executive Board informed of progress relating to the Children's Vaccine Initiative. The Children's Vaccine Initiative was established by a group of cosponsors including WHO, UNICEF, the World Bank, UNDP and the Rockefeller Foundation after the World Summit for Children (New York, 1990). The Initiative was an international, collective effort, designed to harness new scientific developments in order to increase protection from infectious diseases and to simplify vaccine delivery.
2. Today, about two million children are still dying each year from diseases that can be prevented by currently available vaccines, and several million more lives could be saved if there were effective vaccines against diseases such as AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.
3. There is now a new commitment of philanthropic foundations, and a renewed commitment of vaccine-producing industries and a variety of public sector institutions to bring these vaccines to current and future generations of children. The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) has been established after a series of meetings (World Bank, Washington, March 1998; Bellagio, Italy, March 1999; Seattle, United States of America, July 1999) and a one-year, in-depth review of immunization-related activities undertaken by major interested partners.
4. The Alliance has been set up to fulfil the right of every child to be protected against vaccine-preventable diseases of public health concern. Its mission is to save children's lives and to protect peoples' health through the widespread use of safe vaccines, with a particular focus on the needs of developing countries.
5. The underlying principle of the Alliance is that partners agree on a set of shared objectives to which they will all contribute through joint action. The Alliance is not a new organization; it is a grouping which broadens the partnership for vaccines and immunization and enhances the synergy between the partners' contributions.
6. The strategic objectives of the Alliance are: (i) to improve access to sustainable immunization services; (ii) to expand the use of all existing cost-effective vaccines; (iii) to accelerate the development and introduction of new vaccines; (iv) to accelerate research and development efforts for vaccines and related products specifically needed by developing countries; and (v) to make immunization coverage an integral part of the design and assessment of health systems and international development efforts. Interim targets have been adopted to assure within a specific time-frame a reduction in the inequalities of access to vaccines and to reduce the preventable disease burden, especially among the poor.

7. The Alliance will operate through the following mechanisms:
- a Global Fund for Children's Vaccines to facilitate (i) the financing of underutilized and new vaccines; (ii) the strengthening of immunization delivery infrastructure; and (iii) the research and development of priority vaccines for poor populations and countries;
  - a governing board of initially 12 members, expressing the highest political commitment of partners and providing a forum for decision-making on common objectives and strategies. The Executive Heads of partner organizations, *ex officio*, act in turn as Chairmen of the Board for a term of two years. The Director-General of WHO has accepted to serve as Chair for the first two years, and the Executive Director of UNICEF, for the second term. Members on the Board include representatives from WHO, UNICEF, the World Bank, industrialized and developing countries, technical agencies, research and development agencies, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation;
  - a coordinating secretariat, facilitating the work of the Board and helping to ensure the involvement and representation of all bodies involved in immunization activities; the secretariat will be housed by UNICEF at its Geneva premises;
  - a working group consisting of dedicated staff within each of the major partners, to ensure that the decisions of the Board are translated into operational actions appropriate to each lead agency;
  - task forces of limited duration to address specific issues: three task forces with agreed terms of reference are currently operating – on country coordination under WHO leadership, on advocacy led by UNICEF, and on financing led by the World Bank. In addition, the Board has requested that an analysis of gaps in research and development should be completed within a year;
  - an international meeting to be held approximately every two years in order to bring together the broader immunization community.
8. It is expected that the Alliance will be publicly launched at the same time as the Global Fund for Children's Vaccines at the end of January 2000, possibly during the World Economic Forum.
9. As a result of the establishment of the Alliance, the partners involved in setting up the Children's Vaccine Initiative have agreed to close it down as of 31 December 1999.

#### **ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

10. The Board is invited to adopt the following draft resolution:

The Executive Board,

Appreciating the achievements of worldwide immunization programmes;

Recalling resolution WHA42.32 on the Expanded Programme on Immunization, which urged Member States to continue their vigorous pursuit of the aim of providing immunization services for all children of the world;

Reaffirming resolution WHA44.4 on the acceleration of vaccine research and development efforts against childhood diseases;

Further recalling resolution WHA45.17 on the integration of cost-effective new vaccines in national immunization programmes,

RECOMMENDS to the Fifty-third World Health Assembly the adoption of the following resolution:

The Fifty-third World Health Assembly,

Noting with deep concern that over 12 million children die each year from infectious diseases and that some two million children still die each year from diseases that can be prevented by currently available vaccines;

Noting that existing immunization programmes currently save about three million lives per year worldwide and prevent nearly 750 000 cases of blindness, paralysis and mental disability annually;

Recognizing that in some countries immunization rates are stagnating and even declining, and that there is great disparity in the availability of vaccines between industrialized and developing countries;

Recognizing that many developing countries cannot afford to pay all the costs associated with universal childhood immunization and the establishment of safe and efficient delivery systems to cover their child populations;

Acknowledging that immunization is one of the most cost-effective health interventions and that it contributes to reducing poverty,

1. ENDORSES the objectives of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) – a global network comprising governments, bilateral agencies, technical agencies, WHO, UNICEF, the World Bank, the pharmaceutical industry, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation – namely, improving access to sustainable immunization services; expanding the use of all existing safe and cost effective vaccines; accelerating the development and introduction of new vaccines; accelerating research and development efforts for vaccines and related products specifically needed by developing countries, particularly vaccines against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis; and making immunization coverage a centre-piece in the design and assessment of international development efforts, including debt relief;

2. URGES Member States:

(1) to support the work of the Alliance by calling upon leaders at the highest levels to back vaccine and immunization initiatives in their countries, and to remove obstacles that reduce access to vaccines;

(2) to formulate common strategies to enhance immunization delivery and to stimulate introduction of vaccines;

(3) to increase national resources devoted to childhood immunization;

(4) to encourage public and private agencies to meet the objectives of the Alliance;

(5) to support and further GAVI's objectives through the Global Fund for Children's Vaccines and other mechanisms available among the partners;

(6) to support new financing mechanisms for vaccine development and immunization;

3. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to promote the objectives of the Alliance through leadership in the field of vaccines and immunization;

(2) to advocate increased private and public sector support for vaccine research and development and for the strengthening of immunization services in the poorest countries.

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