



Press release

Health in the Sahel region: the AFD, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and GAVI are working together to increase vaccination rates in six Sahel countries

Paris, 26 June 2015 – Today, the Agence française de développement (AFD, French Development Agency), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation signed an innovative partnership worth €100 million at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development, in the presence of Minister Laurent Fabius and Minister of State for Development and Francophony, Annick Girardin. The partnership aims to increase vaccine coverage in six French-speaking countries of the Sahel region: Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad.

This three-way financing agreement will facilitate the introduction of new vaccines and renewal of existing programmes, as well as strengthening the healthcare systems of the countries concerned. Thanks to the efforts made by these countries, vaccine coverage has improved significantly in the last decade, but the proportion of children receiving all basic vaccines remains too small.

Laurent Fabius, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development, said that *“Healthcare is of capital importance as part of our international action, not only because it is an essential component of development, but also because it is closely linked to human rights and the safety of people, which are issues around which our diplomacy is highly active. I welcome the launch of this partnership aimed at strengthening vaccination programmes and healthcare systems in six Sahel countries, and which shows that ‘coalitions of players’ can be put in place to foster development.”*

Bill Gates, Co-Chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, said: *“France has again taken action to support the Gavi vaccination programme, helping to ensure that hundreds of millions of children receive basic vaccinations and a healthy start in life. France has consistently played a pioneering role in financing programmes designed to strengthen health systems. Despite a challenging economic environment, today France reaffirms its dedication to international cooperation.”*

According to Anne Paugam, Director-General of the AFD, *“in a context of great change, the AFD is committed to seeking innovative mechanisms by forging new partnerships and developing new instruments, in order to mobilize additional sources of financing. The AFD therefore welcomes this first partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and GAVI Alliance, which will help improve the health of people living in the six countries in question and contribute to regional health security.”*

“Gavi would like to thank France and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for this investment through the AFD which will contribute to protecting 15 million children against vaccine-preventable diseases, thus saving half a million lives”, said Dr Seth Berkley, CEO of Gavi. *“This innovative*



partnership once again highlights France's strong commitment to supporting global health and the development of the most fragile countries."

France reaffirmed its support for GAVI during the GAVI Pledging Conference in Berlin on 27 January 2015, where the Minister of State for Development and Francophonie, Annick Girardin, announced this pilot initiative, in addition to a new commitment of €150 million to the International Finance Facility for Immunization (IFFIm). This conference helped raise US\$ 7.5 billion to launch effective vaccination campaigns and prepare the future.

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The **French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development (MAEDI)**, a leading contributor of funds and proposals, addresses the global challenges related to health through the deployment of its development assistance programmes. The healthcare assistance provided by France represents more than €700 million per year. Through its diplomatic network, its international cooperation expertise and its great experience in innovative financing mechanisms, MAEDI works effectively to improve the health of people in poor countries, including in French-speaking Africa.

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The **Agence française de développement (AFD)**, French Development Agency) is a public financial institution implementing the policy laid down by the French Government and works to combat poverty and foster sustainable development. It is present on four continents through a network of 71 local offices, providing funding and support for projects improving the living conditions of local people while supporting economic growth and protecting the environment. In 2014, the AFD dedicated €8.1 billion to financing projects in developing countries and French overseas territories.

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Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance is a public-private partnership committed to saving children's lives and protecting people's health by increasing access to immunisation in poor countries. The Vaccine 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 contributed to the immunisation of an additional 500 million children and the prevention of approximately 7 million future deaths. Learn more at www.gavi.org and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.

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Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people – especially those with the fewest resources – have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Dr. Susan Desmond-Hellmann and Co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.

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