



**NOGUCHI MEMORIAL INSTITUTE
FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH**

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON

**Statement from George Armah on the World Health Organization (WHO) Strategic Advisory
Group of Experts (SAGE) Decision to Approve Rotavirus Vaccines for Global Use**

Embargoed for release: June 5, 2009 10:00 am CET; 4:00 am EST

“After studying rotavirus for more than 25 years, I know the burden of the diarrheal disease in developing nations in Africa all too well. More than 83 percent of children in the region will become sick with it before reaching 18 months of age. Rotavirus takes the lives of thousands of young children around the world each year, and it takes an emotional toll on countless parents who, in some cases, have traveled miles on foot desperately seeking treatment for their children suffering from it,” said George Armah, a veteran investigator and professor at the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research in Ghana. “But while rotavirus is one of the most common and deadly diarrheal diseases, it is also one of the most preventable – with vaccination. The WHO decision supporting global use of rotavirus vaccines will help save children’s lives around the world.”

For more information, please visit <http://www.path.org/news/pr090605-who-rotavirus.php>.

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Statement from Dr. Maharaj Kishan Bhan on the World Health Organization (WHO) Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) Decision to Approve Rotavirus Vaccines for Global Use

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“For many years I witnessed firsthand the burden of diarrheal disease — and rotavirus in particular — on children in developing countries in Asia,” said Dr. Maharaj Kishan Bhan, the secretary to the government of India for the department of biotechnology. “I’ve worked with members of the global health community and we have made great progress in developing promising diarrheal disease prevention and treatment interventions. Through our work, we have realized one of the best ways to protect children in low-resource settings from rotavirus — the most common and deadly diarrheal disease — is to prevent them from getting sick with it in the first place. Rotavirus vaccinations empower us to do this. They are a critical component in our work to save children’s lives and prevent senseless deaths from this preventable and treatable disease.”

For more information, please visit <http://www.path.org/news/pr090605-who-rotavirus.php>.

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Statement from Professor Zulfiqar Bhutta on the World Health Organization (WHO) Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) Decision to Approve Rotavirus Vaccines for Global Use

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“I have done extensive research focusing on maternal and child health policy for many years. Even with the advances we have made in recent decades, children around the world are still dying each day from preventable and treatable illnesses like pneumonia and diarrheal diseases such as rotavirus infections,” said Zulfiqar Bhutta, professor and head of the division of maternal and child health at the Aga Khan University and SAGE member. “Rotavirus has long been a serious threat to children around the world, particularly since it is found everywhere; and, unlike other diarrheal diseases, socioeconomic status, improved hygiene, sanitation and water cannot slow its transmission. Vaccines are a critical component in our work to protect children from this deadly diarrheal disease. We need to ensure rotavirus vaccines are available to children everywhere. The need is especially great in developing nations in Africa and Asia where the vast majority of rotavirus associated deaths occur.”

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**Statement from Professor Fred Binka on the World Health Organization (WHO)
Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) Decision to Approve Rotavirus Vaccines for
Global Use**

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“While most people may not be familiar with the term ‘rotavirus,’ whether they realize it or not, by age three, almost every person has had it. In the developing world, rotavirus is one of the leading causes of death in children under age five,” said Professor Fred Binka, project manager for the INDEPTH Malaria Clinical Trials Alliance, epidemiology professor and Dean of the University of Ghana School of Public Health. “Now, we can change this. The WHO’s recommendation on the global use of rotavirus vaccines allows developing nations in Africa and Asia, where the threat of rotavirus and diarrheal disease is significant, to apply for GAVI Alliance funding to incorporate the vaccines into their national immunization programs. The widespread introduction of safe and effective rotavirus vaccines can dramatically reduce the needless deaths associated with this lethal disease.”

For more information, please visit <http://www.path.org/news/pr090605-who-rotavirus.php>.

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Statement from Dr. Ciro de Quadros on the World Health Organization (WHO) Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) Decision to Approve Rotavirus Vaccines for Global Use

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“Regardless of where they live, virtually all children become infected with rotavirus by the age of three. Yet, 90 percent of child deaths due to rotavirus occur in the world's poorest countries where access to medical care is often limited,” said Dr. Ciro de Quadros, Executive Vice President of the Sabin Vaccine Institute. “The WHO recommendation for global use of rotavirus vaccines underscores the need to protect children in low-resource settings and, when vaccines are introduced as part of a country’s national immunization program, they will prevent millions of needless deaths.”

For more information, please visit <http://www.path.org/news/pr090605-who-rotavirus.php>.

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Health Systems Program

Statement from Dr. Mathuram Santosham on the World Health Organization (WHO) Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) Decision to Approve Rotavirus Vaccines for Global Use

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“The WHO recommendation on the global use of rotavirus vaccines is a remarkable milestone in the fight to combat one of the leading global killers of children,” said Dr. Mathuram Santosham, professor of international health and pediatrics and director of the Health Systems Program and Center for American Indian Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. “Rotavirus vaccines provide an opportunity to stop the most common and deadly form of diarrhea in children, and they have the potential to save the lives of thousands of children in the developing world each day.”

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CENTRE POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT DES VACCINS, MALI

Projet des Maladies Infectieuses

Directeur General : Samba Ousmane SOW, M.D., M.Sc.
Associate Professor of Medicine

Projet des Maladies Infectieuses: Measles Vaccine Initiative ♦ Enteric Disease Project ♦ Pneumococcus, Meningococcus, & *Haemophilus influenzae* Prevention Program
Projet de Paludisme: Bandiagara Malaria Project ♦ Malaria Training Program

Statement from Dr. Samba Ousmane Sow on the World Health Organization (WHO) Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) Decision to Approve Rotavirus Vaccines for Global Use

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“The difference between whether or not a child survives rotavirus — the most common and fatal diarrheal disease — often comes down to geography,” said Dr. Samba Ousmane Sow, associate professor of medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. “Children in developing countries in Africa are more likely to die from rotavirus and the severe dehydration it can lead to than children in countries such as the U.S. simply because they lack access to the medical care needed to prevent and treat rotavirus. By making rotavirus vaccines widely available to children around the world, we can change this.”

For more information, please visit <http://www.path.org/news/pr090605-who-rotavirus.php>.

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Statement from Dr. K. Zaman on the World Health Organization (WHO) Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) Decision to Approve Rotavirus Vaccines for Global Use

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“Rotavirus is responsible for an estimated 200,000 deaths in children in Asia under the age of five each year. This amounts to nearly one-third of all annual rotavirus related fatalities in children in this age group,” said Dr. K. Zaman, scientist and epidemiologist, child health unit, public health sciences division at the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR, B). “Safe and effective rotavirus vaccines are needed to save lives and reduce the enormous public health burden associated with rotavirus, especially in developing countries. Prevention through vaccination is critical for effective control of rotavirus. And, more broadly, the inclusion of rotavirus vaccines in the routine childhood immunization program in developing countries will help achieve the Millennium Development Goal of reducing childhood mortality.”

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