

Sanofi to deliver 1.7 billion doses of OPV for polio eradication

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Sanofi Pasteur, the vaccines division of Sanofi has announced its commitment to provide 1.7 billion doses of Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) to support the Global Polio Eradication Initiative's (GPEI) strategy to eradicate polio this decade. The doses of OPV will be delivered through 2017 for GPEI polio vaccination program. As a result of vaccination, polio cases have been reduced by 99 percent over 20 years, saving millions of children from paralysis. The GPEI has set the goal of eradicating the disease completely. Today only a few countries, namely Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria are still affected by polio.

In addition to OPV campaigns, the World Health Organization's (WHO) expert group on immunization (SAGE) recommends that all countries introduce at least one dose of injectable inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) in routine polio immunization programs. Sanofi Pasteur is responding to this strategy with the expansion of production capacities of IPV.

"Wiping out polio for good is in sight and Sanofi Pasteur intends to remain an active contributor to achieve zero polio," said Mr Olivier Charmeil, president and CEO of Sanofi Pasteur. "We believe that the introduction of IPV in routine polio immunization will consolidate the tremendous progress achieved over the last decades and ensure a polio-free world for the future. Sanofi Pasteur has been a leading provider of polio vaccines and a supporter of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative for over 20 years. We intend to continue to be a major supporter of WHO and its partners to finish the job."

Mr John Hewko, general secretary of the humanitarian service organization, Rotary International, a spearheading partner in the polio eradication initiative added, "Sanofi Pasteur's commitment of 1.7 billion vaccine doses comes at a crucial moment

as we make the final push needed to end polio once and for all. On behalf of Rotary's 1.2 million members worldwide, I commend and thank Sanofi Pasteur for its steadfast support."

Polio vaccination protects against disease from all three types of polio virus. SAGE now recommends that all countries introduce at least one dose of IPV in routine polio immunization programs to mitigate the risk of circulating Vaccine-Derived Poliovirus (cVDPV). The introduction of IPV will pave the way for the cessation of Oral Poliovirus Vaccine Type 2 (OPV2) since wild poliovirus type 2 has already been eliminated. It is hoped that, with this new vaccination schedule, wild poliovirus type 1 and 3 will also be eradicated within the next few years.

Since 1988, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, spearheaded by WHO, Rotary International, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and UNICEF with additional support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has achieved a 99 percent reduction of the number of polio cases worldwide. Polio is caused by three strains of poliovirus, types 1, 2 and 3. Wild poliovirus type 2 has already been eliminated, and it is hoped that poliovirus type 1 and 3 will be eradicated within a few years, definitively wiping polio from the surface of the earth.

Over the past decades, Sanofi Pasteur has supplied more than 5 billion doses of OPV to UNICEF. In response to an outbreak in Egypt and a request from WHO, the company developed the first monovalent oral polio vaccine, which helped in declaring Egypt polio free in 2006. Between 1997 and 2005, Sanofi Pasteur donated over 120 million doses of OPV to respond to emergency situations in African countries affected by conflicts. Sanofi Pasteur is a leading supplier of IPV, available as a stand-alone poliovirus vaccine as well as a component of combination pediatric vaccines to immunize against many diseases in a single shot.

Sanofi Pasteur, the vaccines division of Sanofi, provides more than 1 billion doses of vaccine each year, making it possible to immunize more than 500 million people across the globe. A world leader in the vaccine industry, Sanofi Pasteur offers the broadest range of vaccines protecting against 20 infectious diseases. The company's heritage, to create vaccines that protect life, dates back more than a century. Sanofi Pasteur is the largest company entirely dedicated to vaccines. Every day, the company invests more than EUR 1 million in research and development.