

Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah
Remarks
GAVI Alliance
Announcement of Advanced Market Commitments of \$1.5 billion
Rome, Italy
February 9, 2007

Grazie, Minister Padoa-Schioppa.

It is a pleasure to be here with you all in Rome, and to add my voice to the growing chorus of support from GAVI's friends and partners around the world.

Before I left Amman, my little daughter, Salma, asked me why I was going to Italy. I told her that there is a group of very special people I want to thank: the people of Italy, Canada, Norway, the United Kingdom, and Russia.

What have they done? She asked me... and the gears of my mind started spinning, as I struggled to find the words to explain Advanced Market Commitments to a six year old!

But as I looked at my daughter, sweetly smiling up at me as she awaited my answer, I realized the truth was simple enough for a child to understand.

I said, "They have promised to save the *lives* of thousands of children like you, and the *hearts* of thousands of mothers like me."

And the more I thought about it, the more I felt that really said it all. You are giving the gift of health...and, more than that, the gift of hope. Thanks to you, more families will have a fighting chance to see their babies survive... to see their boys and girls grow up... their sons and daughters live productive lives. Thanks to you, entire communities may find the strength to push back against poverty... and entire countries may take a step up the ladder of human development.

Worldwide, pneumonia kills roughly 4,400 people every day. That is like losing an entire Milan every year... a Jordan every four.

But now, with your support for additional pneumococcal vaccines, we can stop this tragic loss of life, and start building tomorrows instead.

Just as importantly, by putting your faith and finances in this solution, you are helping break down the barriers of health inequality between rich and poor.

Today, a baby born in Sierra Leone is over *fifty times* more likely to die before its fifth birthday than a child born in Italy, and *more than a hundred times* more likely to die than a child born in Iceland or Singapore.

One quarter of our children still have no protection from common preventable diseases.

Imagine what it is like for a mother in the developing world to watch her precious child die from a disease whose cure has been available in the Western world for half a century?

Unless we close the gap between the children who have access to vaccines, and those who do not...these heartbreaking inequalities will continue.

That is why the work of the GAVI Alliance, and partners like you is so important.

The challenges are daunting... but you have shown that overcoming them is doable. Recent headlines boast a vaccine renaissance... three new vaccines arrived on the market in 2006- the most in a single year... pharmaceutical industries are undergoing a revival... measles death rates are down by 60%... and immunization rates have hit a record high in developing countries.

If we continue to work together, there is so much more we can achieve... and I am proud and honoured to support your work.

Proud and honoured because of your commitment to improve health systems in developing countries...

Proud and honoured because of the innovative ways you overcome financing challenges...

Proud and honoured because of the confidence you have earned from those who give... and those in need....

Proud and honoured because of the millions of boys and girls whose lives you have saved.

In these troubled times, your countries have shown humanity's great capacity for good.

I can hardly wait to tell Salma all about it when I get home.

Thank you very much.