



For Immediate Release

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First Ever World Health Assembly Resolution to Fight Childhood Pneumonia
Important progress in the fight against the world's leading killer of children

Baltimore, May 21, 2010 – For the first time ever, the World Health Assembly passed a resolution today focused on the prevention and treatment of pneumonia, the world's leading killer of children. This resolution, approved by a consensus, reflects the growing momentum to fight this treatable and preventable cause of suffering and illness.

“No child should suffer from a disease that is so easily prevented and treated,” said Mary Beth Powers, Chief of Save the Children's Newborn and Child Survival campaign. “Yet, more than 1.5 million children each year die from this disease. With existing and affordable vaccines and antibiotics most of these lives could be saved. This resolution calls on countries to use these tools and outlines how doing so will save millions of young lives.”

Jim Dobbin MP and Lord Avebury, co-Chairs, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Global Action Against Childhood Pneumonia in the UK stated "We are delighted that the World Health Assembly (WHA) has approved the resolution on pneumonia. The successful passage of this resolution shows the vital commitment of WHA member states to the prevention, protection and treatment of pneumonia and will be of enormous help in combating the world's leading killer of children.”

The resolution calls for collective action by policy makers, donor agencies and civil society to fight childhood pneumonia by accelerating access and delivery of proven pneumonia prevention and treatment interventions. The resolution calls for the implementation of the Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Pneumonia (GAPP) and estimates the recommended interventions – including vaccination against measles, pertussis, Hib and pneumococcal disease, treatment with antibiotics, and protective measures like breastfeeding and improvements in indoor air quality – could achieve a 67 percent reduction in pneumonia deaths by 2015.

“Today the world's health ministers deserve credit and praise. Their collective resolution to fight childhood pneumonia shows that the leading killer of children worldwide is preventable and treatable. Everyone should congratulate them for their leadership today and encourage them to follow through at home by making pneumonia a priority in their local programs,” said Orin Levine, Executive Director of the International Vaccine Access Center at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Awareness about the burden of pneumonia is growing and the WHA resolution will be an important boost for the many organizations around the world working to overcome the disease. The Global Coalition against Child Pneumonia, made up of nearly 100 influential organizations from around the globe, marked the first annual World Pneumonia Day in November 2009 with events in 39 countries on 6 continents. The next World Pneumonia Day will be on November 12, 2010.

About The Global Coalition against Child Pneumonia

The Global Coalition against Child Pneumonia and the World Pneumonia Day Coalition, was established in April 2009. It seeks to bring focus on pneumonia as a public health issue and to prevent the millions of avoidable deaths from pneumonia that occur each year. The coalition is grounded in a network of international government, nongovernmental and community-based organizations, research and academic institutions, foundations, and individuals that have united to bring much-needed attention to pneumonia among donors, policy makers, health care professionals, and the general public. Learn more at www.worldpneumoniaday.org.

Save the Children is the leading independent organization for children in need, with programs in 120 countries, including the United States. We aim to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives by improving their health, education and economic opportunities. In times of crisis, we mobilize rapid assistance to help children recover from the effects of war, conflict and natural disasters. Save the Children is made up of 29 member organizations working together worldwide. www.savethechildren.org

The International Vaccine Access Center (IVAC), has as its mission to accelerate global access to life-saving vaccines through development and implementation of evidence-based policies. IVACs work to strengthen the evidence base for vaccine introduction includes undertaking targeted, policy-focused research in areas such as disease burden, cost-effectiveness, vaccine policy, demand forecasting and disease epidemiology. For more information, please visit www.jhsph.edu/ivac

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