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Sanofi to supply 1.7 bn polio vaccines to GPEI

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Bangalore: Sanofi Pasteur, the vaccines division of Sanofi, will 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.

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.

Mr Olivier Charmeil, president and CEO, Sanofi Pasteur, said that, "Wiping out polio for good is in sight and Sanofi Pasteur intends to remain an active contributor to achieve zero polio. 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, Rotary International, a spearheading partner in the polio eradication initiative, said that, "A strong and steady supply of polio vaccines will ensure that every child is fully protected against polio. 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."

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 types 1 and 3 will also be eradicated within the next few years.