

Technical Working Group on Advance Market Commitments (AMCs) for vaccines

On Thursday 7th September, the technical Working Group on Advance Market Commitments (AMCs) for vaccines held its first meeting. The meeting was jointly convened by the Finance Ministers of Italy, the UK and Canada in order to build on the support expressed for AMCs at the G8 Heads Summit in St Petersburg, Russia, in July. It was hosted by the Italian Treasury. Representatives from 15 countries attended (Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States). A range of other institutions also participated in the meeting, including the European Commission, the World Bank, the Global Alliance on Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI), the Gates Foundation, the WHO and industry representatives.

The meeting reviewed the work undertaken so far on the legal, technical, institutional and financial aspects of an AMC pilot. The group agreed that additional technical work was necessary and undertook to meet again in coming weeks to agree the details necessary for donors to make concrete financing commitments and to launch a pilot for a Pneumococcus vaccine before the end of the year.

Background

AMCs offer a powerful and cost-effective market-based mechanism to accelerate the development and availability of priority new vaccines against diseases that currently kill millions of people in developing countries.

In January 2005, G7 Finance Ministers launched a consultation process to advise on technical aspects of a pilot AMC. The World Bank and GAVI have provided significant assistance on the design of a pilot AMC. An Advisory Group brought together AMC stakeholders, academics and technical experts in the global health community to provide insight into the technical and structural options for the pilot. An independent Expert Committee was also convened to provide an independent recommendation on which vaccine would be most suitable for the initial AMC pilot.

The advisory process concluded that AMCs were a feasible, innovative, sustainable, cost-effective, results-oriented and market-based tool in the fight against global disease and poverty. The recommended candidate for the first AMC pilot is Pneumococcal disease. Pneumococcus kills around 1.6 million people a year, most of them children. A successful AMC would prevent roughly 5.4 million deaths by 2030. The Expert Committee also recommended that a second AMC for a malaria vaccine be explored to stimulate early R&D investment and to pilot the impact of the AMC on early stage vaccines. A successful Malaria AMC would prevent roughly 2 million deaths by 2030.