

The Global Coalition Against Child Pneumonia Applauds the Adoption of the World Health Assembly Resolution

Prioritizing the Prevention and Treatment of Pneumonia

Important milestone signals progress in the fight against the world's leading killer of children

On the heels of the release of new data that confirms pneumonia remains the world's leading killer of children, the World Health Assembly passed an important and timely resolution today to prioritize the prevention and treatment of this devastating disease. On behalf of the Global Coalition Against Child Pneumonia, we applaud this commitment by the World Health Organization (WHO) and member states as an important step forward in the fight for child survival.

The resolution unites global and government policy makers, donor agencies and civil society to work together to fight childhood pneumonia by accelerating access worldwide to proven pneumonia prevention and treatment interventions. In its Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Pneumonia (GAPP), WHO and UNICEF estimate that the implementation of these interventions – including vaccination against 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.

The adoption of this resolution helps bring the global community closer to realizing these goals, but it is now incumbent upon all parties that have a role to play to take swift action. Donor countries must meet their funding commitments. Developing country governments must make the investments and health system improvements necessary to ensure that available vaccines and antibiotic treatments reach families in need. Industry must continue the research and development of new vaccines for developing world populations, and strive to provide those vaccines at fair prices. And families must help protect their children from possible infection by ensuring they receive pertussis, measles, Hib and pneumococcal vaccines, limiting exposure to indoor air pollution and ensuring adequate infant nutrition.

In the fight for child survival, the time for action is now. Without a dedicated effort to prioritize pneumonia prevention and treatment, the global effort to reach Millennium Development Goal 4 will fail. We thank the WHO and WHO member states for their leadership, and we urge all parties to work together to fulfill the promise that aggressive pneumonia protection, prevention and treatment efforts hold for the world's children.