

Global development

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Brown wins \$4bn vaccine pledge

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Gordon Brown's innovative scheme to raise billions of dollars for vaccinations to prevent children dying in the developing world will finally get off the ground this morning with the announcement that five countries - and Bill Gates - have signed up, pledging the target figure of \$4bn (£2.2bn).

The International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm) will be launched by Mr Brown, together with the economic and finance ministers of France, Spain, Sweden and Italy, in the presence of Graca Machel, who chairs the Vaccine Fund.

The fund is the money-raising arm of Gavi, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisations, which will get the \$4bn to push forward its immunisation programme in the developing world.

Since 2000 when it was set up, Gavi has immunised more than 78 million children against diseases such as measles, diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough. It estimates that the deaths of more than one million children have been averted. With the \$4bn, Gavi expects to save five million children's lives by 2015 and a further five million thereafter.

"By matching the power of medical advance with a wholly new innovative mechanism to front load long-term finance, the International Finance Facility for Immunisation which we are launching here today will enable 10 million lives to be saved and spare millions of families the agony of a loved one needlessly dying," Mr Brown will say.

The launch is a coup for the chancellor, but much more is riding on its success. Gavi has been chosen as a pilot project. If all goes well, Mr Brown will hope to persuade donor governments to use the same finance mechanism to boost development aid massively.

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