"MY CHILD MATTERS": 
26 PROGRAMMES LAUNCHED IN 16 COUNTRIES 
TO FIGHT CHILDHOOD CANCERS

- In the run-up to World Cancer Day on 4 February 2007, 
the International Union Against Cancer (UICC) and sanofi-aventis present 
an interim report on their commitment to fight childhood cancer 
in developing and newly industrialized countries -

Paris and Geneva, February 1, 2007 – On the eve of World Cancer Day, the International Union Against Cancer (UICC) and sanofi-aventis present their first interim report on the My child matters programme, launched in 2004 to advance the fight against childhood cancers in countries where paediatric oncology is still struggling to emerge. The initiative so far has funded 26 projects* in 16 resource-constrained countries: Bangladesh, Bolivia, Egypt, Honduras, Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, Peru, the Philippines, Romania, Senegal, Tanzania, Ukraine, Venezuela and Vietnam.

Although childhood cancers represent a small percentage of all cancers, the gap in the survival rate between industrialized and developing countries is marked and it is in these resource-constrained countries that 80% of children with cancer live. Each year, more than 160,000 children are diagnosed with cancer and approximately 90,000 die. In industrialized countries, nearly 80% of children being treated for cancer will survive. Unfortunately, this survival rate drops to 20% and even 10% in developing countries where access to information, early detection, effective care and treatment are often not available. And yet today, most childhood cancers can be cured provided they are detected early and treated on time.

Because every child is important, the My Child Matters programme encourages institutions (hospitals, NGOs, etc.) to develop pragmatic approaches to improve awareness, early diagnosis, access to care and treatment, pain control and better management of the social and cultural aspects of the disease for both children and their families.
Thanks to financial support (up to €50,000 per year per project), advice from "mentors" on the Advisory Steering Committee,* and the assistance of local sanofi-aventis teams, the pilot projects are beginning to bear fruit.

So far, 900 members of the medical professions have participated in training sessions on childhood cancer and its management, 4,000 children have benefited from these programmes, and 2,100 families are being given support to help them gain a better understanding of their child's disease and how to live with it. In Tanzania for example, the project that was given support has already helped to reduce the time needed to analyse the results of a biopsy from six to two weeks. The number of childhood cancers diagnosed has improved from 145 to 364 at the end of 2006 (2007 objectives are to reduce the time to analysis to under a week and to diagnose 650 children). In Honduras, the treatment dropout rate has fallen from 22% at the start of the project to 10% at the end of 2006 (the objective is to reduce it to 5% by the end of 2007). The number of families who have received psychological and social assistance has also increased, from only a few dozen to start with to 200 families in Egypt, 300 in Bangladesh, 360 in Venezuela and 450 in Vietnam by the end of 2006.

These preliminary and encouraging results show that it is possible to help project managers to reach progressively the objective of giving children from these countries the same chances of survival as those living in developed countries.

Dr Franco Cavalli, the president of UICC, says, "We must improve the survival rate of children with cancer worldwide. In developing countries, where 80% of children with cancer live and survival percentages are the lowest, government health budgets are insufficient to meet all needs. Thanks to the 'My Child Matters' programme, experts communicating through international networks forge valuable and lasting relationships. This initiative is helping to raise awareness that childhood cancers respond to treatment and can often be cured."

This commitment is shared by Jean-François Dehecq, Chairman of sanofi-aventis, who adds: "One of the essential roles of a company like ours is to identify new avenues for research and to make innovative and effective treatment available to patients. Our corporate sponsoring action enables us to go a step further and construct, with UICC, a programme which encourages initiatives in countries where paediatric oncology is less advanced, by giving them financial support and promoting an exchange of experience. Helping to even out the excessive differences between countries, in particular to help children also means more solidarity."

**About UICC**

The International Union Against Cancer (UICC) is the only international non-governmental organization that is dedicated solely to the global control of cancer. Its vision is of a world where cancer is eliminated as a major life threatening disease for future generations. With over 270 member organizations in more than 80 countries, UICC is a resource for action and a voice for change.

**About sanofi-aventis**

Sanofi-aventis is one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies. Backed by a world-class R&D organization, sanofi-aventis is developing leading positions in seven major therapeutic areas: cardiovascular, thrombosis, oncology, metabolic diseases, central nervous system, internal medicine and vaccines. Sanofi-aventis is listed in Paris (EURONEXT: SAN) and in New York (NYSE: SNY).
*My Child Matters Advisory Steering Committee, list of members:*

Dr Franco Cavalli (UICC President; Director, Istituto Oncologico della Svizzera Italiana),
Dr Tim Eden (President, International Society of Paediatric Oncology),
Dr Joe Harford (Director of International Programs, National Cancer Institute, USA),
Dr Jean Lemerle (President, French-African Paediatric Oncology Group),
Dr Ian Magrath (President, International Network for Cancer Treatment and Research),
Dr Raul Ribeiro (Director, International Outreach Program, St Jude Children's Research Hospital, USA),
Dr Hélène Sancho-Garnier (Head, Prevention and Epidemiology Department, Epiadure, France),
Dr Eva Stelianova-Foucher (IARC/International Agency for Research on Cancer),
Dr Isabelle Tabah-Fisch (Oncology Senior Medical Director, sanofi-aventis),
Geoff Thaxter, (Vice President, International Confederation of Childhood Cancer Parent Organizations).

* List of 26 projects in 16 participating countries:

**Bangladesh**
1. A home and a palliative care unit for destitute children – S Choudhury, ASHIC Foundation, Dhaka
2. Raising awareness, increasing early detection and treatment of childhood cancers – MA Mannan, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Dhaka

**Bolivia**
1. Learning to grow in special circumstances – Lucia Parejas, AFANIC foundation, Santa Cruz
2. Free leukaemia diagnosis for Bolivian children – Ricardo Amaru Lucana, School of Medicine, Major de San Andres University, La Paz
3. Fighting childhood cancers and increasing early diagnosis in paediatric oncology – Dr Yolanda Ernst, Instituto del Oriente Boliviano, Santa Cruz

**Egypt**
1. Increasing awareness and reinforcing social well-being in children with cancer – A Omar, Fakkous Cancer Center, Fakkous.
2. Inform and educate to improve patient management in paediatric oncology – SA Hadi, National Cancer Institute, Cairo

**Honduras**
1. Fighting treatment dropout in paediatric oncology patients through the creation of multi-regional satellite clinics – L Fu, Hospital Escuela Tegucigalpa

**Indonesia**
1. Childhood leukaemia and retinoblastoma early detection and reference treatment campaign – Dr Melissa S Luwi, Indonesian Cancer Foundation, Jakarta Pusat
2. Programme for early detection and prompt treatment of retinoblastoma in Indonesia – Rita S Sitorus, Department of Ophthalmology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Indonesia, Jakarta Pusat

**Kenya**
1. Raising awareness of the prevalence of Burkitt's lymphoma to increase early detection, prompt treatment and the identification of associated environmental and familial factors – Prof Nicholas Anthony Othieno Aninya, Kenya Medical Research Institute, Nairobi

**Mali**
1. Improving medical management and psychosocial support for children with cancer in Mali – Dr Togo Boubacar, Gabriel Toure Hospital, Bamako

**Morocco**
1. National campaign to increase early diagnosis of childhood cancers – FM Alaoui, La Maison de l'avenir, Rabat
2. Pain management in children with cancer – M Harif, Moroccan Society of Haematology and Paediatric Oncology, Casablanca
Peru
1. Survey of paediatric oncology in Peru. Proposal to set up a medical children's home – Dr Gustavo Sarria Bardales, INEN (National Institute of Cancer Patients), Lima
2. Improving care and quality of life of children with cancer – Nelly Isabel Therese Huamani and Carlos Enrique Preciado Huapaya, ALDIMI, Lima

Philippines
1. Extending access to treatment and improving care of childhood retinoblastoma and leukaemia – J Lecciones, Philippine Children's Medical Center, Quezon City

Romania
1. Improvement of diagnostic services for children with cancer – Doina Mihaila, St Mary's Emergency Children's Hospital, Iasi
2. Assessing childhood cancer burden in Romania and suggesting possible improvements – Adela Ratiu, Institute of Oncology "Prof Dr Alex Trestioreanu", Bucharest
3. Building a future for Romanian children living with cancer – Olga Rodica Cridland, PAVEL Association, Bucharest

Senegal
1. Setting up a paediatric oncology continuous care unit – C Moreira, Hôpital le Dantec, Dakar

Tanzania
1. Extending access to treatment for childhood Burkitt’s lymphoma – T Ngoma, Ocean Road Cancer Institute, Dar es Salaam

Ukraine
1. Immunocytochemical diagnosis of leukaemias and malignant tumours in children – D Gluzman, National academy of Sciences of the Ukraine, Kiev

Venezuela
1. Nutritional and psychosocial support for paediatric oncology patients and their families – C Machuca, Oncology Institute, Dr Luis Razetti, Caracas
2. Improving the safety of parenteral nutrition by the creation of a special unit and the training of healthcareers – C Zappi, Children's Hospital, JM de los Rios, Caracas

Vietnam
1. Programmes for prevention, care and support of childhood cancers in Vietnamese provinces – N. Ba Duc, National Cancer Institute, Hanoi.