

Canada pledges \$440 million to vaccinate poor children

November 28 2014

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper said Friday his government would provide support worth hundreds of millions of dollars towards life-saving vaccines for children around the world.

Harper made the announcement at an event with Senegalese Prime Minister Mohammed Dionne at a clinic in Dakar to mark the introduction in Senegal of a [vaccine](#) for rotavirus—a virus that causes diarrhoea in [children](#) so severe it can be fatal.

He didn't put a figure on the funding but an aide said it amounted to 500 million Canadian dollars (\$440 million, 355 million euros).

On his official website, Harper said he was proud of Canada's "leadership to promote maternal, newborn and [child health](#) in developing countries so that women and children around the world can also live healthy and productive lives".

The cash is Canada's response to an appeal by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), an international partnership of private and public sector health organisations that aims to increase access to basic vaccines not previously available in developing countries.

(GAVI) in May appealed for money to immunise an additional 300 million children between 2016 and 2020 against a variety of diseases, thus saving an estimated five to six million young lives.

GAVI executive director Seth Berkley said Canada's donation would allow his organisation to support vaccination in 73 poor countries around the world.

Harper was in Dakar to attend a weekend summit of the leaders of French-speaking nations.

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