

PRESS RELEASE

International Mobilization to Fight Against Childhood Cancer in Low- and Middle- Income Countries

- **21 countries from Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe gather in Senegal**
- **Highly significant results among the 33 hospitals and NGO partners**
- **Call to boost participation via the “Dakar Manifesto”**

Geneva, Switzerland and Paris, France - July 1, 2009 – On the initiative of the International Union Against Cancer (UICC) and sanofi-aventis, representatives from 21 countries have met in Dakar, Senegal, on July 1 and 2, to review progress and strengthen measures in the fight against cancer in low- and middle- income countries, begun in 2004 through the “**My Child Matters**” program. During these two days, experiences will be shared by representatives from WHO and other international institutions, hospitals and NGOs from Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, France, Honduras, Italy, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, the Netherlands, Paraguay, the Philippines, The Republic of Congo, Senegal, Switzerland, Tanzania, Turkey, Ukraine and the United States.

This assembly benefits from the patronage of Madam Viviane Wade, First Lady of Senegal and President of the Education Santé Association, and the support of the First Ladies of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Morocco, Niger and Tanzania. The “**Dakar Manifesto**”, due to be signed at the Presidency of the Republic of Senegal, will call on all stakeholders and institutions concerned for more participation and action to improve the outcome of childhood cancer around the world.

Isabel Mortara, Executive Director of UICC, said: *“The My Child Matters programme has provided an extremely important framework for raising awareness of the curability of childhood cancer and for building local capacity in low income settings for early diagnosis, treatment and care. It is rewarding to note how this innovative partnership has already made a significant difference to the lives of children and their parents in some 20 countries”.*

This commitment is shared by Christopher A. Viehbacher, Chief Executive Officer of sanofi-aventis, who declared: *“These first very significant results show that it is possible to build new forms of long-term partnership to address often-neglected health problems such as childhood cancer in developing countries”.* He added: *“We must now drive this socially responsible approach further and reduce the excessive disparities between different regions in the world. That is why, in addition to the close involvement of our teams in developing this initiative, we have decided to continue and strengthen our financial commitment by matching the € 3 million already donated with a further € 3 million in 2010-2013”.*

Cancer causes immense suffering and is one of the leading causes of mortality worldwide. In industrialized countries, children with cancer can now expect a nearly 80% chance for survival. In lower income countries, however, this figure falls to 20% and even 10% in the poorest regions, where the large majority of the 160,000 new cases of children diagnosed with cancer each year are found. This makes a huge disparity. Yet childhood cancer can usually be cured provided medical care starts early.

In 2004, sanofi-aventis and the UICC joined forces to create “My Child Matters”, an initiative to fight against disease which has for too long been viewed as inevitable, and to help low- and middle-income countries in providing better treatment for childhood cancer. After more than four years, this program has supported 33 field projects led by hospitals and NGOs in 21 countries¹ on 4 continents. These projects have improved every aspect of the cancer care chain: providing better information, education and prevention; improving professional training and ensuring earlier

diagnosis; fostering better access to healthcare, pain management, and palliative care; and increasing understanding of the social aspects of this disease, both for the children and their families.

Due to the number of countries involved, “My Child Matters” is now one of the largest initiatives dedicated to fighting childhood cancer in low- and middle- countries. This program combines financial support for projects with a network of international experts to help boost local skills in a spirit of progress and solidarity. At the end of 2008, over 12,800 children and 6,600 families have been helped by this program, and some 2,850 healthcare professionals had received training.

The progress report presented by Professor Raul Ribeiro of the St Jude Children’s Research Hospital, and Chairman of the Steering Committee², shows that childhood cancer can be treated at any stage in a country’s development. Significant results have been obtained, including a reduction in the number of patients stopping treatment in the Honduras, due to the creation of decentralized care centers operating close to the people; setting up the first palliative care centre in Bangladesh; improving access to treatment for children with Burkitt’s lymphoma in Tanzania; the implementation of a anti-pain strategy in Morocco; a reduction in mortality associated with chemotoxicity in Senegal; and the creation of a diagnosis reference guide in Ukraine with free access to checkups for children. The resulting advances and the experience acquired in certain emerging and developing countries mean that effective practices can now be shared with other countries which face the same challenges, as part of a genuine cooperation agenda within the Southern hemisphere.

About UICC

The International Union Against Cancer (UICC) is the leading international non-governmental organization dedicated to the global prevention and control of cancer. Founded in 1933, UICC unites over 300 member organizations, specialized and engaged in cancer control, in more than 100 countries across the world. UICC is non-profit, non-political and non-sectarian. Its headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information go to: www.uicc.org

About sanofi-aventis

Sanofi-aventis, a leading global pharmaceutical company, researches, develops and distributes therapeutic solutions to improve the lives of everyone. The Group is listed on the Paris stock (EURONEXT PARIS: SAN) and New York (NYSE: SNY) markets. For more information go to: www.sanofi-aventis.com

Editor notes:

¹ Between 2005 and 2009 “My Child Matters” has focused on an action program in partnership with 33 hospitals and NGOs in 21 countries in the 4 continents, including Asia: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines and Vietnam; in Latin America: Bolivia, Colombia, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela; in Eastern Europe: Romania and Ukraine; in the Middle East and Africa: Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, Senegal and Tanzania.

² The “My Child Matters Steering Committee”: Chairman, Prof. Raul Ribeiro (Director of the International Outreach Programme and Leukemia/Lymphoma Division, St Jude Children’s Research Hospital, USA) and members: Prof. Franco Cavalli (Director, Istituto Oncologico della Svizzera Italiana), Prof. Maaarten Egeler and Prof. Tim Eden (Current and former Presidents of the International Society for Paediatric Oncology, Netherlands), Dr. Joe Harford (Director of International Relations, National Cancer Institute, USA), Ruth Hoffman (Director, Candlelighters Foundation, USA), Prof. Tezer Kutluk (Turkish Association for Cancer Research & Control, Turkey), Prof. Jean Lemerle (President, Groupe Franco-Africain d’Oncologie Pédiatrique, France), Prof. Ian Magrath (President, International Network for Cancer Treatment and Research, Belgique), Dr Twalib Ngoma (President AORTIC, Ocean Road Cancer Institute, Tanzania), Dr Eva Steliarova-Foucher (Centre International de Recherche sur le Cancer, France).

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