Introduction of cholera vaccine project in Bangladesh (ICVB)

In collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh, ICDDR,B is commencing a 5 year long project to assess the feasibility of using an oral cholera vaccine. Evidence-based data shows that increasing rates of cholera and diarrhoeal patients coming to the ICDDR,B diarrhoea hospital particularly from Mirpur in recent years. Therefore, Mirpur area of Dhaka city has been chosen as the study area where 120,000 people above the age of 1 year will be vaccinated. Pregnant women and children under one would be excluded. The project has two components: vaccine provision and behaviour change communication for use of hand washing and safe water treatment. ICDDR,B will evaluate the effectiveness of vaccinating a mass population against cholera. This vaccine has already been successfully introduced in countries like Vietnam (for ten years) and as well as in India (in 2009). The chosen vaccine is safe, affordable and effective in preventing cholera. One of the aims of this project is to transfer the cholera vaccine technology and to make it more affordable for future availability and use in Bangladesh. The project is kindly supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for five years. GoB, ICDDR,B and other international organizations with their expertise in vaccination programmes will be collaborators. Three consecutive meetings will be held to start off the project from 28 to 31 January, 2010.

ICVB held the extended Advisory Committee meeting at the Sasakawa seminar room of ICDDR,B on 28 January 2010 at 9 am. The Chair of the session was Dr AFM Ruhul Haque, Health Minister, Ministry of Health and Family Welfares and the special guests were Mr. Shaikh Altaf Ali, Secretary MOHFW, Mr. Monzur Hossain, Secretary LGD, Dr. Syed Omar Khaiyam Joint Secretary, MOHFW. Dr. Alejandro Cravioto, Executive Director of ICDDR,B, Dr. Firdausi Qadri, Dr. Stephen Luby and other representatives from ICDDR,B, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, World Health Organization, International Vaccine Institute, Incepta Pharmaceuticals and Shantha Biotechnics Ltd. were present at the seminar. The meeting felt the necessity of the project and urged all to lend their helping hand for the successful completion and future implementation of the project.

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