

Telephone: + 265 789 400
Facsimile: + 265 789 536



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MINISTRY OF HEALTH
P.O. BOX 30377
LILONGWE 3
MALAWI

MINISTER OF HEALTH

Ref.No. ADM1/1

18th July, 2011

Hon Ms. Marion Pedersen
Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs
Parliament of Denmark
1240 Copenhagen K

DENMARK

Dear Honourable Ms. Marion Pedersen,

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world, but despite the challenges we face, we have achieved very promising results with our increased focus on health. We are currently enjoying a vaccination coverage rate of around 90 percent of our children. This very high coverage rate, among the highest in our region, has saved countless children's lives and improved the health and financial situation for their families.

The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI), our main development partner supporting the immunisation programmes in our country, is collaborating with the Ministry of Health to maintain and expand our immunization programmes. With the support from GAVI, WHO and UNICEF, Malawi is preparing to launch a new vaccination programme destined to immunise our children against the pneumococcal disease. Pneumococcal disease is caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and can cause a range of infections, from relatively mild ear infections to fatal pneumonic, meningitis and sepsis. With the introduction of this vaccine, the lives of our children will be protected against one of the leading causes of child mortality in the developing world. The success of the Malawi immunization programme would not have been possible without support provided by Denmark to GAVI and Malawi.

Together with the GAVI Alliance, I would like to invite two members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to join a delegation of Nordic Members of Parliament to visit Malawi on 18th to 20th October, 2011 to meet with members of the Malawi Parliament as well as government officials and donor representatives, civil society partners, WHO and UNICEF. We would welcome your visit to experience firsthand the impact of these life-saving GAVI programmes.

A draft programme is attached to this invitation. The GAVI Secretariat is available to make the logistic preparations together with your committee Secretary if the Committee decides to attend.

Yours sincerely,



Prof. David K. Mphande
MINISTER OF HEALTH