Speech of the Minister of Health at the International Conference Centre on the launch of the five year-project for the introduction of the Rotavirus vaccine in Seychelles held on 23rd October 2015

Mr. Vice President,
CEO of Cable and Wireless, Seychelles,
Chairman of the Lions Club,
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honor and a pleasure to address you on this auspicious occasion - the addition of yet another vaccine in the armory of our disease prevention strategy, our strategy to eliminate childhood mortality from preventable causes and our strategy, our goal, our yearning to ensure that every single child in Seychelles leads healthy, happy, and fulfilling lives in his home, his neighbourhood and his community.

I thank you all for being here today and for taking part in this magnificent event. Today, Government, the private-sector, non-governmental organizations, health professionals, parents, children, we are all united in our desire to herald the beginning of the vaccination of our children against that pernicious virus called the rotavirus.
Pernicious it is indeed. Rotavirus can cause severe diarrhea in children. Worldwide it accounts for approximately one-third of the nearly 600,000 deaths caused by diarrhea in children. Vaccination is the best way to protect our Seychellois children from it and from the deadly dehydration that it can cause. The introduction of the vaccine will greatly reduce, if not eliminate, the diseases and deaths that it can cause. It will also avert the future costs of treating the diseases that it causes.

Our goal is to vaccinate about 1500 children every year. This represents the totality of children that meet the criteria for vaccination. The introduction of this vaccine reaffirms the overall commitment of the Seychelles Government to work closely with all our partners, local and international, to improve the health of our children. Over the years, we have worked very closely with the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and many others to consolidate our immunization programme. The Government of Seychelles has never failed to contribute needed resources and our health care workers, especially our community nurses, have never failed to do what needs to be done to maximize coverage and goodwill. That is why our immunization programme is so robust. Our commitment and the partnership that we have proudly created around that commitment is second to none. I wish today to thank all our partners and
our health workers and I celebrate the successes we have achieved together. Thank you!

For this project in particular, I am pleased to convey my gratitude to the Lions Club of Seychelles. Lions Club has been instrumental in planning and coordinating the Rotavirus Vaccination Project and in assisting my Ministry to mobilize willing sponsors. I am equally grateful to Cable and Wireless, Seychelles Ltd for opening their hearts out to facilitate the donation of some SR 902,200.00 (USD 69,400.00). It is a pleasure and an honour for the Ministry of Health to work with both organizations, not just in this one project but in the many other joint projects that we have started and concluded together. On behalf of the Seychelles’ Government, on behalf of Seychellois parents and children and on my own behalf, I thank both organizations for responding to our calls when we need them.

To conclude, I wish the Rotavirus Vaccination Programme every success ahead.

I thank you.