The flag of Rwanda was raised at the International Vaccine Institute (IVI) headquarters today during a ceremony welcoming the country's accession to IVI.

Rwanda joined the Seoul-based international organization dedicated to vaccines for global health in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

IVI hosted an accession ceremony in hybrid format to celebrate the occasion streamed live.

Dr. Daniel M. Ngamije, Minister of Health of Rwanda in his remarks said, "The application to join IVI was based on the shared aspiration towards IVI's mission: to discover, develop, and deliver safe, effective, and affordable vaccines for global public health.

"Global collaboration, vaccine availability and equity, as well as strong vaccination campaigns are key to ending the pandemic while preserving effective routine immunization programs across all continents," he pointed out

Adding that to reach that goal, there is a need to support each country to invest in human capacity, health systems, and infrastructure. The support of partners such as Gavi, UNICEF, IVI, and others will enable us to reach that goal.

IVI's Board Chair George Bickerstaff welcomed all guests and expressed his gratitude to the government of Rwanda in a video message.

Mr. Bickerstaff said, "We're proud to share ambitious—and imperative—health goals with the government of Rwanda. IVI's priority disease areas are characterized by their associations with poverty and inequity, and as outlined in the Kigali Declaration, we firmly believe that eradicating vaccine-preventable infectious diseases such as Neglected Tropical Diseases will help achieve the SDGs."

Ambassador Sued said, "As one of the oldest and most experienced multilateral organizations in Korea, Rwanda looks forward to learning from IVI, from your extensive knowledge, and from leveraging your member states' expertise,"

She explained that Rwanda believes in this opportunity to work with IVI as we endeavor, as Minister Ngamije says, to create, establish, and strengthen our R&D ecosystem.

Rwanda joins 38 other countries and the World Health Organization as member

states of IVI.