



Open Letter to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, vaccine manufacturers and donor governments ahead of the Global Vaccination Summit in Brussels 12th September 2019

11 September 2019

Dear Gavi, vaccine manufacturers and donors,

We write you ahead of the Global Vaccination Summit where you will discuss life-saving vaccinations.

MSF is concerned that progress globally and in Gavi countries is not sufficiently far-reaching, fast or fair. WHO/UNICEF estimate that in 2018, about 19.4 million children missed out on life-saving vaccination which is an increase from 2017. One in five children in countries supported by Gavi misses out on the basic immunisations they need.

How do we ensure every last child is vaccinated? One key action is to address high vaccine prices and double down on progress to improve vaccine affordability. We have **three recommendations for Gavi**, the Vaccine Alliance, as you embark on your next strategic period, 2021-2025. First, Gavi should do more to further **drive down high vaccine prices**, which remain a barrier to achieving universal immunisation coverage. The pneumonia vaccine (pneumococcal conjugate vaccine or PCV) is a prime example. Pneumonia is the world's biggest infectious killer of children, killing 808,694 children in 2017 alone. Pneumonia deaths account for 15% of all deaths of children under 5 years old. The high cost of PCV is a main reason why approximately one-third of countries around the world have not introduced the vaccine into their standard vaccination package. PCV remains one of the most expensive vaccines in Gavi's portfolio, at around \$9 (€8.15) per child (for the three doses), which threatens the long-term sustainability of pneumonia vaccination in national immunisation programmes that lose Gavi donor support.

Second, if we are to achieve global immunisation goals and improve health outcomes for all, Gavi should use its expertise and influence to ensure prices are affordable in the long-term for all countries, even those that do not benefit from Gavi donor support. We therefore recommend that Gavi improve its **vaccine pricing work for the benefit of middle-income countries (MICs)** not eligible for Gavi support. These countries face significantly higher prices for vaccines because they do not benefit from Gavi prices. Some lower-middle-income countries report that they pay **four times higher** than the Gavi price for vaccines which results in them being left behind, particularly with the introduction of newer, more expensive vaccines such as PCV. This is particularly problematic for countries hosting large numbers of refugees, such as Jordan. Special efforts are needed to support these MICs, in addition to those transitioning away from Gavi donor support.

Third, we request that Gavi works with Advance Market Commitment (AMC) donors to reserve the remaining \$262.5 million in the AMC fund for **a new, more affordable PCV supplier** to enter the market, stimulate competition and help drive down prices. The Serum Institute of India has indicated that

it will have its PCV vaccine ready for market in 2020 and has announced that it will sell at approximately \$6 for all three doses (dependent on volumes) – over 30% less than the current prices charged by Pfizer and GSK to Gavi.

To vaccine manufacturers, we call on you to **lower vaccine prices** so that they are more affordable for both Gavi countries and non-Gavi middle-income countries, particularly for PCV. In 2017, after much international pressure, Pfizer and GSK did lower the price of PCV for organisations working in humanitarian settings, which was welcome. You should now also lower the price of PCV for middle-income countries that are not eligible for Gavi support. Additionally, vaccine manufacturers must remove barriers that hinder market entry for new PCV suppliers. Pfizer’s pursuit of patents to stifle development of other more affordable PCVs mean countries are over-dependent on only two vaccine manufacturers: Pfizer and GSK. We call on manufacturers to make the real prices paid for vaccines publicly available in line with World Health Assembly **transparency** resolutions. Finally, commit to supplying the **vaccine quantities needed to meet demand and fulfil supply**. Shortages of needed vaccine volumes causes delays in immunisation programmes and puts children’s lives at risk.

To the European Commission and donors: please **continue to fund global immunisation efforts, including through a commitment to Gavi** during the next 2020 replenishment. We urge you to ensure **EU funding** drives progress towards an improved vaccines market to ensure more affordable vaccines both for Gavi and non-eligible MICs in the long-term. Please also take steps to increase vaccine price transparency by committing to **publishing national prices** paid, aligned with World Health Assembly price transparency Resolutions.

There is urgent need for action to improve access to immunisation through addressing vaccine affordability to reach those left behind, in particular children living in remote areas, informal urban settlements and conflict-affected countries. Gavi, vaccine manufacturers, and donors can make life-saving changes if they act responsibly.

We look forward to hearing the outcomes of the Global Vaccination Summit.

Yours sincerely,



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