

# Step up for immunization: Sustaining progress, protecting futures

Making the case for funding Gavi 6.0





***Democratic Republic of the  
Congo, 2023***

*A vaccine is administered  
during the launch of a polio  
vaccination campaign.*

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# Immunization:

Key for child survival worldwide



**Democratic Republic of  
Congo, 2023**

*A child shows her marked  
finger after being  
vaccinated against polio  
at the Bulengo site for  
displaced persons in Goma.*

© UNICEF/UNI424530/Benekire



**Immunization is a key public health intervention, essential for achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Every child has the right to immunization as part of their right to health.**

Last year - 2024 - was pivotal and marked the 50th year of the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI). This momentous milestone celebrated one of humanity's greatest achievements in the last five decades with significant progress in protecting children worldwide from preventable diseases through vaccination efforts. With over 154 million lives saved and a substantial reduction in the global burden of infectious diseases, immunization remains public health's best buy showcasing what is humanly possible.

Since the initial EPI programme ambition of protecting children against six childhood diseases in 1974, children born today can be protected against a whole range of vaccine preventable diseases thanks to a suite of new vaccine innovations. 2024 saw the groundbreaking malaria vaccine deployment drive, building on strong vaccine track record of effective vaccines introductions. Additionally, this year has seen the expansion and scale-up of key programmes such as tackling childhood pneumonia with pneumococcal vaccines (PCV) vaccine and cervical cancer with the human papillomaviruses (HPV) amongst others.



**154m**

**Lives saved**



**\$1:\$54**

**Return on investment**



**>30**

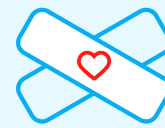
**Vaccine antigens**

## Immunization gains at risk

Despite the huge gains achieved in the last 50 years, global immunization coverage rates have stagnated in recent years. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic had fuelled the largest backsliding in immunization coverage in three decades. This was because of disruptions to routine health services in many countries as a result of the pandemic. The latest World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF data show that global childhood immunization coverage stalled in 2023, leaving 2.7 million additional children un- and under-vaccinated compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2019. These trends reflect ongoing challenges with disruptions in the provision of health-care services, logistical challenges, vaccine hesitancy and inequities in access to services.

According to the findings, the number of children who received three doses of the vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTP) in 2023 – a key marker for global immunization coverage – stalled at 84 per cent (108 million). However, the number of children who did not receive a single dose of the vaccine increased from 13.9 million in 2022 to 14.5 million in 2023. Additionally, more countries are facing protracted crises with an increase in the number of humanitarian settings, ultimately posing challenges to health-care systems and immunization platforms. As such more than half of unvaccinated children live in the 31 countries with fragile, conflict-affected and vulnerable settings, where children are especially exposed to preventable diseases because of disruptions and lack of access to security, nutrition, and health services.

We see an increase in humanitarian crises, the effects of the climate crisis as well as the economic downturn and shrinking fiscal space in countries all taking their toll on immunization systems. As a result, outbreaks of once-controlled diseases like measles, polio and diphtheria are on the rise. These outbreaks are often a direct result of declining immunization rates and can have devastating effects on public health.



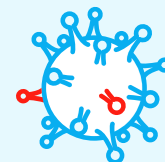
14.5m

zero-dose children



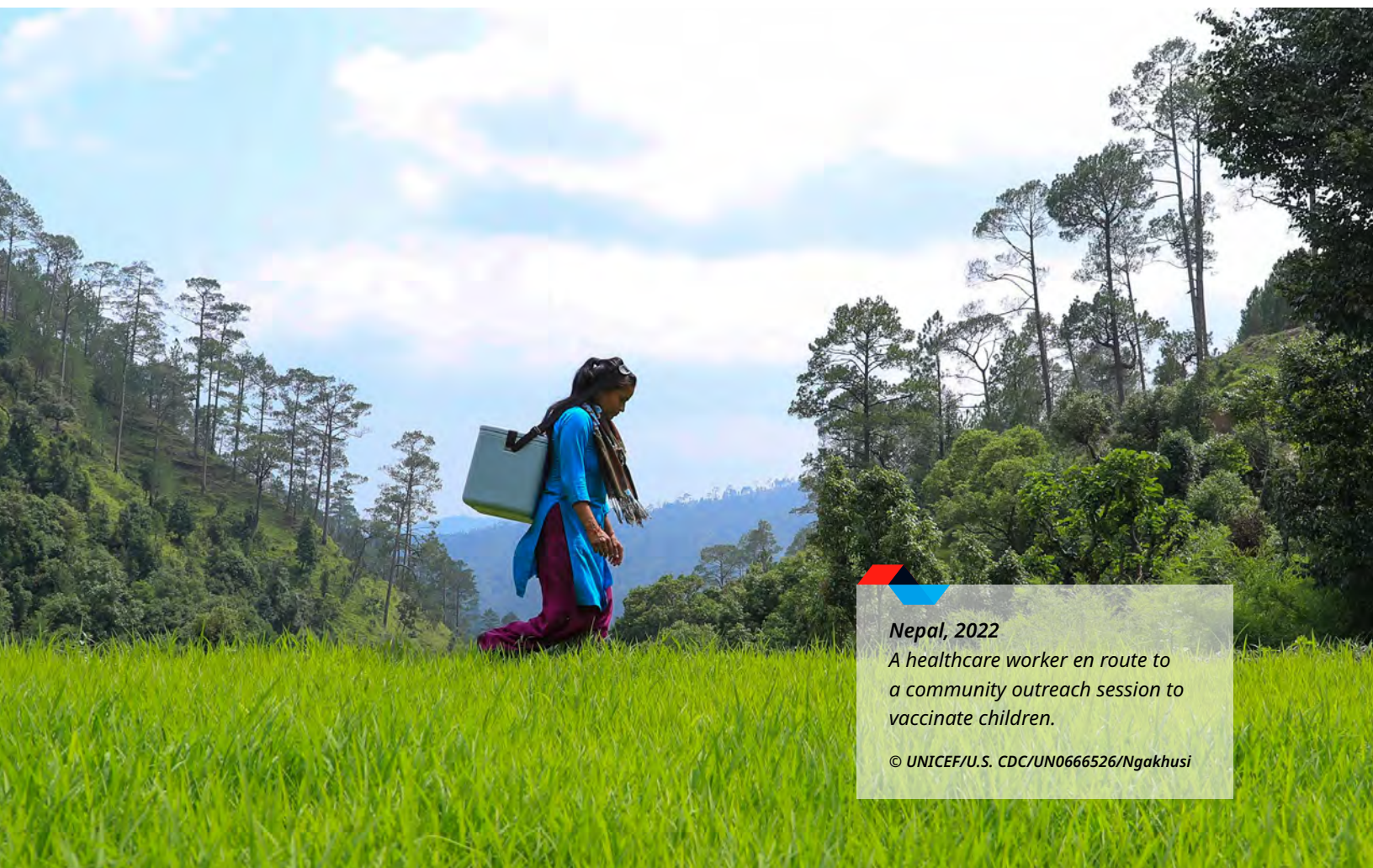
84%

DTP3 coverage



82

Disease outbreaks (2022)



**Nepal, 2022**

*A healthcare worker en route to a community outreach session to vaccinate children.*

© UNICEF/U.S. CDC/UN0666526/Ngakhusi

## The big catch-up: Reclaiming the gains

The pandemic impacted immunization levels in over 100 countries causing more than 25 million children missing at least one vaccination in 2021 alone, resulting in outbreaks of preventable diseases becoming more prevalent and severe. As such, WHO, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, along with Immunization Agenda 2030 and many other global and national health partners, are working toward 'The Big Catch-up', a targeted global effort to boost vaccination among children.

Partners are working with countries to strengthen health-care workforces, improve health service delivery, build trust and demand for vaccines within communities, and address gaps and obstacles to restoring immunization.

# Universal and equitable vaccine access:

A moral, health, economic and security imperative



**Ghana, 2023**

*A community health nurse provides vaccines at a camp in Sapelliga.*

© UNICEF/UN0798314/Yebuah





## **Investing in strong immunization systems is not just a moral imperative, it also makes economic and social sense. It results in healthy, productive and resilient societies leading to wider economic benefits.**

Additionally, recent outbreaks of COVID-19, Dengue, Ebola, H1N1 (swine flu) amongst others have highlighted the centrality of vaccines to global health security.

## **Immunization as a fundamental right and moral imperative**

Every child has the right to immunization. Yet to hold governments to account, international and regional frameworks and agreements on immunization are key. On top of the SDGs, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Immunization Agenda 2030 (IA2030) emphasize this right and aim to reduce child mortality. Regional agreements also underscore immunization as a public health priority in Africa. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child does this by establishing children's right to health and medical care. Vaccination is understood as being part of that right, as made explicit by the Addis Declaration, which commits to universal vaccine access, setting specific coverage goals, and calling for increased political and financial investments in immunization programmes across the continent.


Despite progress in reducing child mortality, 4.9 million children still die annually from preventable diseases, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia. Vaccine inequity persists, with significant disparities between high-income countries (HICs) and low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), and among vulnerable populations. For example, there are twice as many zero-dose children in African countries as in the rest of the world (18.7 per cent compared to 6.9 per cent). Displaced children, those living in remote settings, in refugee camps and humanitarian crises are at a higher risk of missing out on vaccinations, increasing child morbidity and mortality among the most vulnerable.

## **Investing in vaccines is good economics**

Vaccines and immunization are often public health's best buy and the most cost-effective public health intervention. A study covering 73 Gavi-supported countries shows that, for every US\$ 1 spent on immunization in the 2021–2030 period, US\$ 21 are saved in health-care costs, lost wages and lost productivity due to illness and death.

When considering the wider societal value of lives saved and people living longer and healthier lives – the return on investment is estimated to be US\$54 per US\$1 spent.

By preventing diseases, vaccines reduce health-care costs and the economic burden on families and societies. Vaccinated children are more likely to grow into healthy and productive adults, strengthening human capital and driving economic growth. As such, funding immunization programmes should not be viewed as a cost but an investment. Immunization programmes save lives and prevent disability secondary to vaccine preventable diseases (VPDs). In addition to the societal benefits, direct savings are made from reducing the burden on already fragile and stretched health systems.



*Nigeria, 2023*

*A healthcare worker  
immunizes a child in Yamatu  
Deba, Gombe State.*

© UNICEF/UNI504789/Boman

## Vaccines as a cornerstone of global health security

As recent outbreaks have highlighted, vaccines are central to our global health security, playing a leading role in preventing and controlling infectious diseases worldwide. Not only are vaccines critical in protecting from diseases, but they also contribute to herd immunity once a certain population vaccine coverage is achieved. This reduces the spread of diseases within communities, saving lives and livelihoods. This widespread protection is particularly important in an interconnected world, where outbreaks in one region can quickly become global threats. Vaccines also help prevent the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance, often referred to as a 'hidden pandemic' of the world.

Alongside scaling up vaccine delivery, it is crucial for governments to strengthen health-care systems to support the delivery of immunization services. Strong and resilient health systems are key to maintaining continuity of life-saving services in the face of natural disasters such as floods and droughts, in humanitarian settings and in public health emergencies. The increased spread of vector- and water-borne diseases, such as malaria, diarrhoea, dengue and cholera, has led to a higher demand for vaccinations against these life-threatening illnesses. However, the current vaccine supply is insufficient to meet this demand with a need to strengthen the infrastructure around vaccine stockpiles including increased alignment and coordination amongst agencies.

Vaccines have been instrumental in eradicating smallpox and nearly eliminating polio, demonstrating their potential to significantly reduce the burden of disease, save lives and strengthen health systems globally. Continued investment in vaccine research, development, and distribution is essential for maintaining and improving global health security in the face of both known and emerging infectious threats.

To continue the delivery of routine immunization services amidst these challenges, it is key to scale up investments in immunization. Only with adequate and sustainable funding, can governments – with Gavi support – build resilient and sustainable immunization systems to prevent disease outbreaks, support surveillance and strengthen preparedness and response capacities for global health emergencies.



# Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance:

## Driving equity in immunization



**Egypt. 2023**  
*Two girls at a local polio  
vaccination campaign in  
Ismailia City.*

© UNICEF/UNI578535/Mostafa

## **Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, plays a critical role in enhancing vaccine access in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), making substantial contributions to global immunization efforts.**

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, is a public-private global health partnership that aims to overcome market barriers and increase access to immunization in lower-income countries. It brings together UN agencies like WHO and UNICEF, vaccine manufacturers, donors, civil society groups, non-governmental organizations, research institutions, and others, to achieve common health goals through international cooperation and solidarity.

Between 2000 and 2020, Gavi helped to vaccinate more than 1 billion children in close partnership with 78 lower-income countries, saving over 17 million lives. Today, a child born in a Gavi-supported country is 70 per cent less likely to die from a vaccine-preventable disease before their fifth birthday than when the Alliance was established in 2000. These results were driven by Gavi's unique alliance model – shaping the global market for vaccines, bringing effective new vaccines e.g., PCV, shaping markets to make prices affordable and scaling up impact with innovative finance.

## **Time to step up, not step away**

Coinciding with our global SDG and IA2030 targets for immunization, Gavi has launched its ambition plans for 2026–2030 under GAVI 6.0. Alongside the Gavi 6.0 strategy, an investment case of \$11.9 billion was launched on 20 June 2024, with \$2.9 billion already available in existing donor pledges, investment income, and leftover resources from the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, Gavi is seeking \$9 billion in new pledges to achieve its ambitious Gavi 6.0 strategy. This strategy period will coincide with the global deadline to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2030. This is an integral part of the SDGs, particularly Goal 3: good health and well-being, aiming to end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 by 2030 (target 3.2). To achieve this, it is crucial for the global community to significantly accelerate immunization efforts.

Gavi's next strategic cycle provides a unique opportunity to scale up Gavi's impact and ensure all children – especially zero-dose and under-immunized children – can be vaccinated against preventable diseases.

This underscores the importance of continued donor government support for Gavi 6.0 in the lead-up to and at the central replenishment conference in 2025.

## Why fund Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance?

Since its inception in 2000, the Alliance has helped immunize a whole generation – over 1 billion children – and prevented more than 17.3 million future deaths, helping to halve child mortality in 78 lower-income countries. The Alliance plays a key role in improving global health security by supporting health systems as well as funding global stockpiles for Ebola, cholera, meningococcal and yellow fever vaccines.

The Alliance employs innovative financing and the latest technologies – from drones to biometrics – to save lives and prevent outbreaks before disease. Gavi's innovative model has consistently been central to tackling global immunization challenges, even during the most difficult periods, like the recent pandemic.

This is illustrated through Gavi designing and operationalising various instruments such as the Advanced Market Commitment (AMC) for Pneumococcal Vaccine (PCV), which was an innovative financing mechanism to accelerate the global roll-out of vaccine against pneumonia, the world's leading cause of child of deaths. The Pneumococcal AMC reached its conclusion on 31 December 2020, with over 60 AMC-eligible countries having introduced PCV since 2010 by accessing the low AMC price(s) for pneumococcal vaccines. The AMC has ensured low-term, long-term and sustainable vaccine pricing for countries and manufacturers, and stimulated unprecedented demand for PCV in lower-income countries.

The success of the Alliance lies in its ability to draw on the technical and political strengths of the agencies and organizations that constitute it.

Its partnerships with vaccine manufacturers drive innovation in vaccine development, making new and improved vaccines available at lower costs. At the same time, Alliance partners manage well established and extensive relationships with governments and decision-makers on vaccines. By aligning with and playing to the expertise of its partners, the Alliance offers a comprehensive package that covers a broad spectrum of services, from vaccine research and development, manufacturing, licensing, procurement, to delivery and administration – all the while, strengthening the systems that vaccines depend on to reach their intended targets.

In an increasingly complex environment, the Alliance's model continues to evolve, learning from the pandemic, to develop new tools, partnerships, and innovations to enhance and expand immunization efforts for the world's most vulnerable populations.



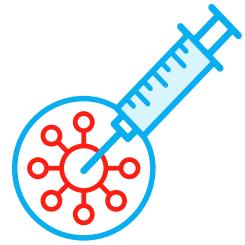
**Guinea, 2023**

*Matina, 4, receives her vaccine against polio in Nzerekore, Guinea.*

© UNICEF/UNI464091/LeLijour

## Gavi 6.0:

A significant evolution from Gavi 5.0



**India, 2023**

A mother holds her two-and-a-half month old child as a nurse gives a Rotavirus oral vaccine during a village Health and Nutrition Day.

© UNICEF/UNI421367/Ahmad



## **The 6.0 strategy will be the most ambitious in Gavi's history: Seeking to protect more people, against more diseases, faster than ever before.**

This broadens the scope and accelerates the pace of immunization efforts compared to Gavi 5.0, while continuing Gavi's core mission of supporting new vaccine introductions, expanding existing programmes, achieving equity, scaling up innovations, and shaping vaccine markets.

Gavi's new 6.0 strategy attempts to deepen the gains across three key domains including equity, localization and sustainability – all the while addressing new and emerging global health challenges.

While Gavi 6.0 focuses on four key areas (Introduce and scale up vaccines; Strengthen health systems to increase equity in immunization; Improve programmatic and financial sustainability of immunization programmes; and Ensure healthy markets for vaccines and related products), we have identified four approaches that can drive their strategy forward, and that we will analyse more closely.

## **Immunization equity**

One of the key refinements in Gavi 6.0 is its strong emphasis on reaching zero-dose and under-immunized children, strengthening immunization systems and addressing equity concerns.

To do this, Gavi will accelerate its work to reduce the number of zero-dose children – contributing to the Immunization Agenda 2030 target of a 50 per cent decrease worldwide by 2030. Part of this is to bring vaccines against 24 different diseases to the poorest countries in the world, as well as accelerate the delivery of new vaccines. For instance, Gavi will help vaccinate at least 50 million children with the recommended four doses of malaria vaccines.

Building on efforts across Gavi 5.0, Gavi aims to integrate immunization into broader primary health-care (PHC) services including nutritional support, clean water, sanitation, and hygiene in the next five years. Key for the Alliance is to strengthen and sustain comprehensive immunization systems as part of strong primary health-care systems. This is essential to making countries' immunization programmes more resilient against global health emergencies and climate-induced shocks.

Moreover, Gavi aims to sharpen its focus on gender and other demand-related barriers, and identify and address inequities in access to health care for instance due to traditional gender norms in different settings.

## Localization

Gavi 6.0 will aim to streamline Gavi's operating model, making it more efficient and responsive to the needs of countries and communities. Furthermore, Gavi will look to increase engagement of expanded partners and local partners as implementing entities to achieve its equity objectives of reaching every last child.

While Gavi 5.0 emphasized reaching the underserved and improving immunization coverage, the strategies, policy frameworks and funding for engaging communities and civil society organisations (CSOs) were less established. The involvement of CSOs and communities was not routinely integrated within country immunization plans and Gavi health system funding streams. In 6.0, CSOs and local partners are recognized as essential in strengthening immunization systems, leveraging local expertise and ensuring community buy-in and participation in immunization efforts. This approach helps in tailoring immunization efforts more effectively. There is a clear and deliberate shift towards community-centric approaches.

Additionally, Gavi's African Vaccine Manufacturing Accelerator (AVMA) is a strategic initiative aimed at boosting vaccine production capabilities in Africa. This programme is crucial for market shaping as it addresses the longstanding issue of vaccine dependency in the continent. Importantly, AVMA contributes to market shaping by creating new market dynamics, encouraging competition, and increasing security of supply in the global vaccine markets. This initiative is expected to enhance Africa's resilience to health crises and its capacity to respond swiftly to regional disease outbreaks, ultimately contributing to global health security.

## Sustainability

Country ownership of national immunization programmes is at the heart of the Gavi model. Gavi has one of the most successful models of encouraging national investment and domestic resource mobilization in global health. In its next strategic period, Gavi aims for countries to fund more than 40 per cent of the costs of their routine vaccines. Fifteen years ago, that figure was just 10 per cent.

Moreover, to ensure the continued sustainability of immunization programmes, Gavi 6.0 proposes adjustments to its cofinancing, eligibility, and transition approach to make them more flexible and context-specific. Compared to 5.0, this includes adjusting eligibility criteria considering a broader range of factors, such as health system capacity, disease burden, and specific country needs instead of a narrow focus on income thresholds.

Gavi 6.0 aims to work more closely with other global health initiatives compared to Gavi 5.0 by adopting a more integrated and collaborative approach. The Lusaka Agenda emphasizes the need for stronger collaboration among global health initiatives (GHIs) to improve strategic and operational alignment.

For Gavi, this means enhancing coordinated, country-level planning for malaria control and immunization programmes with the Global Fund. It also includes joint efforts to strengthen health systems to better address country-specific needs and priorities.



**Madagascar, 2024**

*A mother with her child on the second day of a polio vaccination campaign.*

© UNICEF/UNI587859/Ramasomanana

## New and emerging global health challenges

The investment opportunity for Gavi 6.0 represents a significant evolution and refinement of the Gavi 5.0 strategy as it successfully addresses new and emerging global health challenges. This includes the impacts of the climate crisis, increasing outbreak threats, antimicrobial resistance (ARM), and contexts of fragility and conflict.

Gavi 6.0 is a significant step forward in proactively preparing for and responding to climate-related diseases. The Alliance is ramping up its malaria vaccine programme and aims to introduce a vaccine against dengue. It further puts words into action, by investing in vaccine programmes and stockpiles for outbreak-prone diseases including Ebola, cholera, meningitis and yellow fever to respond to over 150 outbreaks. It is further encouraging to see that Gavi aims to provide for more differentiated and flexible support for fragile and humanitarian contexts, including via tailored engagement plans and new humanitarian partners who can safely negotiate access to insecure areas and reach more vulnerable populations.



**Ecuador, 2023**  
*A nurse in the Kichwa community of Santa Bárbara prepares a vaccine dose.*

© UNICEF/UN0826279/Prut



## Mpox: A growing global health challenge

Recent outbreaks of mpox (previously known as monkeypox) have underscored the importance of strengthening global health systems and immunization efforts in preventing the spread of emerging infectious diseases. While mpox was traditionally confined to parts of Africa, the 2022–2023 outbreak demonstrated its potential to spread globally, particularly in regions with limited access to vaccines and health-care infrastructure. It also showed that LMICs are at risk of not receiving enough vaccine doses to protect high-risk populations, due to a limited global vaccine supply as well as the threat of higher-income countries securing vaccines for their populations first (also seen during the COVID-19 pandemic).

The mpox emergency underlines the critical need for universal health care and rights for all. A failure to adequately invest in health systems and strong public health infrastructure, along with already existent gaps in access to immunization services, puts lives at risk.

The response to mpox also calls for accelerated development and equitable distribution of vaccines, enhanced surveillance and

preparedness systems and building up and strengthening local manufacturing capacities through initiatives such as AVMA. Furthermore, ensuring equitable pricing via Gavi's market-shaping mechanisms, as well as vaccine stockpiling, research and targeted immunization strategies are all critical to preventing future outbreaks and safeguarding vulnerable populations worldwide. Gavi can continue to build on efforts to help tackle outbreak exemplified by facilitation of mpox vaccine donations, securing timely advanced purchase orders with manufacturers and unlocking emergency funding to facilitate roll-out.

Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic enabled Gavi to provide for rapid access to vaccine financing during the early stages of the mpox emergency. Gavi operationalized the First Response Fund at speed within 35 days of the emergency being declared. This is a testament to Gavi's ability to innovate and move fast in crises.

Only a fully funded Gavi can deliver on these critical responsibilities in the next strategy period – hence the importance of donors fully funding Gavi's 6.0 investment opportunity.



# One global health system:

Why vaccine equity is everyone's business



**Madagascar, 2024**

*A healthcare worker marks the finger of a boy recently vaccinated against polio.*

© UNICEF/UNI591931/Andriantsoarana

**If the recent pandemic has taught us anything, it's that there is only one health system – the global one. It is our first primary and collective defense line against diseases, deaths, and economic and social upheavals. And it's as strong as its weakest link. A breach anywhere is a risk everywhere.**

At the heart of this global health system, are immunization and the protection that vaccines afford against diseases. Vaccines are the most cost-effective way to save lives and livelihoods. One under- or un-immunized community anywhere is a global health security risk for all. An investment in vaccines is therefore an investment in healthy societies and economies, and it's an insurance policy against large-scale disruptions and upheavals.

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, is a partnership model that has, since 2000, vaccinated over 1 billion children and saved more than 17 million lives. It has contributed to more than \$220 billion in economic benefits.

Its new 6.0 investment opportunity represents the most ambitious strategy in the Alliance's history. It aims to protect more people against a broader range of diseases at an accelerated pace compared to the previous Gavi 5.0.

We welcome the four approaches we have identified to drive Gavi 6.0 forward:

- **Equity:** Reducing the number of zero-dose children by 50 per cent by 2030.
- **Localization:** Boosting local manufacturing capacities, along with an increased involvement of civil society organizations.

- **Sustainability:** Encouraging increased national investments in vaccines.
- **Emerging global health challenges:** Introducing new vaccines and stockpiling others in outbreak-prone areas.

## **What would a fully funded Gavi 6.0 investment case mean?**

The Vaccine Alliance's investment opportunity outlines the impact of a fully funded Gavi 6.0.

It would mean that at least 500 million children will get immunized, and 8–9 million lives saved. Nearly 50 million children will get vaccinated for malaria – one of the deadliest child diseases. This investment opportunity will catalyse over \$4 billion in financial contributions through domestic co-financing and self-funded vaccine programmes. Prices will be reduced across at least 50 per cent of Gavi's vaccine portfolio, which will generate up to \$800 million in savings. An estimated \$100 billion in economic benefits will be generated for Gavi implementing countries.

Investing in vaccines is clearly not just a moral obligation to save lives from diseases that are preventable through tools we already have, but it also makes economic sense, in both the short and long terms. When it comes to global health security, our defense line against disease is unified, and it's as strong as its weakest point. That is why an investment in immunization services elsewhere is an investment everywhere. It's an insurance policy against national, regional and global economic and social instability – like what we saw during and in the aftermath of the recent pandemic.



**Nepal, 2022**

*A child at a school in Kathmandu during the roll-out of the Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine, given to children between ages 15 months to 15 years.*

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