

First Joint Meeting of the Gavi Board and GPEI Polio Oversight Board (POB)

19 June 2025 | 14:00-16:00 CET

Note for the Record

Attendees

- **Gavi Board Attendees:** José Manuel Barroso (Gavi Board Chair), Anne Schuchat, Karen Sørensen, David Sidwell, Anna Sedgley, Ana de Pro Gonzalo, Greg Widmyer, Omar Abdi, Leila Gharagozloo Pakkala, George Laryea-Adjei, Kate O'Brien, Brian Erazo Muñoz, Lena Nanushyan, Silvia Lutucuta, Alexandra Rudolph-Seemann, Cécile Billaux, Francesca Manno, Frode Forland, Ruth Lawson, Mark Lloyd, Joan Benson, Soleh Ayubi, Bvudzai Magadzire, Saad Omer, Sania Nishtar
- **POB Member Attendees:** Chris Elias (POB Chair, GF); Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (WHO); Sania Nishtar (Gavi); Mike McGovern (Rotary); Omar Abdi (UNICEF); Matt Buzzelli (CDC); Ziad Memish (KSA); Cecile Billaux (European Commission).

Key Take-aways

- Joint session was **timely** ahead of Gavi replenishment and potential recalibration of the 6.0 Strategy
- Broad **support for areas of enhanced collaboration** and **level of ambition**
- “Business as usual” is no longer an option given the current funding environment; we need to **seize on this momentum** to accelerate joint goals
- Importance of continuing efforts to **support IPV and Hexavalent vaccine**
- Requests for **more detail on the “what” and the “how”**, including work planning and reporting mechanisms

Summary of Proposed Action Items

- Broad agreement to initially focus on 4 countries, including Pakistan and Nigeria, and ultimately to **scale collaboration** to all common countries
- Commitment from both boards to develop a **joint global action plan** with **clear accountability** and a **monitoring framework**
- Requests for a **follow-up joint board meeting to review progress**, either as part of the POB meeting in September 2025 or around the World Health Summit in Berlin in October 2025.

Next steps

Action Point	Purpose	Owner	Timeframe
Develop a joint global action plan	The action plan will set out the measures to be undertaken to operationalise the enhanced collaboration clarifying the “what and the how”	JB-TT working group	By end-September

Schedule a follow-up joint board discussion	Define the timing and agenda for the next joint meeting of the Gavi-GPEI boards.	POB Secretariat & Gavi	By end-August
Reporting to Gavi and GPEI Boards, Programme and Policy Committee (PPC) and Steering Committee (SC)	Provide updates on the development of the joint global action plan	Leadership of the GPEI and the Gavi Alliance	By end-October

Annex: Discussion Highlights & Remarks

Gavi Board Chair, Prof. José Manuel Barroso

- This is the first joint meeting between the two boards.
- The two institutions share an unshakable commitment to reaching every child with vaccines, as well as an ironclad commitment to the eradication of polio.
- The goal of this meeting is to establish a clear collaboration roadmap for the months and years to come, which will take the form of a joint Gavi-GPEI plan of action to chart the course towards the alignment of Gavi and GPEI's strategic cycles.

Polio Oversight Board (POB) Chair and President of the Global Development Division of the Gates Foundation, Mr. Chris Elias

- It is essential that GPEI and Gavi fully leverage the reach, experience, and expertise of one another to achieve their ambitious goals.
- This is the most challenging funding landscape that global health has seen for some time. More than ever, we need to identify synergies among global health institutions.
- The goal of this meeting is to inject momentum into making this strengthened and mutually beneficial collaboration a reality.

Executive Director of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency in Nigeria, Dr. Muyi Aina (representing the Honorable Coordinating Minister of Health, Dr. Mohamed Ali Pate)

- Confirmation of the commitment of Minister Pate and the Government of Nigeria to the intensified efforts to interrupt circulating polio virus 2, and to also improve routine immunization coverage as a way to sustain the gains.
- Prioritization of government and community ownership, promoting integration during and outside routine immunization, accountability, and enhancing the quality of vaccination campaigns.
- Nigeria is counting on Gavi, POB and all the GPEI partners to continue the collaboration and meet the targets of polio elimination.
- Nigeria welcomes UNICEF's suggestion for more intense alignment at the country level.
- Together we can seize this moment to drive meaningful change and secure a healthier, more resilient future for all.

Minister of National Health Services, Regulations, and coordination of the Government of Pakistan, Dr. Syed Mustaf Kamal

- In these last few years, the progress of the polio immunization program of Pakistan has surpassed all previous records.
- The commitment of the government of Pakistan, health workers, ministries, and provinces is firm. From the federal to the district level, all are committed to eradicating this virus.
- There is a renewal of the coordination between Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- Support for the introduction of the hexavalent vaccine, which would bring additional value to routine immunization strengthening and polio eradication efforts in Pakistan.
- Pakistan needs continuous support in order to complete these last moments of the journey and get rid of this menace once and for all.

Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

- To achieve the goal of eradication, we need ownership and commitment at the country level. Having Nigeria and Pakistan with us today is very important
- The Gavi and GPEI collaboration to reach zero-dose children, especially in hard-to-reach areas, is very, very important. It is the strong alignments that can give us the best results.
- Agreement on the joint action plan, especially in high-risk areas, is very important and will help us to align as much as possible creating synergies and alignments for better results.
- As for funding, full support from both boards is very important in the context of the Gavi replenishment. Also, we should be prepared to continue our advocacy beyond that moment to ensure full funding for Gavi.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Gavi, Dr. Sania Nishtar

- Gavi LEAP puts us in the strongest possible position to deliver on Gavi's and GPEI's shared priorities. The Gavi LEAP really has the principle of country centricity at its core.
- Gavi will work together with GPEI and also with other partnerships to find every operational efficiency.
- Collaboration between Gavi and GPEI can only occur if there is convergence between polio and EPI teams in our common partner agencies - WHO, UNICEF, Gates Foundation - and when there's convergence between these planning and execution elements at the country level.
- There is much programmatic and strategic overlap between Gavi and GPEI. The IPV is part of our core programs, and we are expanding our window to fund hexavalent vaccine introduction.
- Gavi underscores the collaboration between GPEI and the Big Catch-Up (BCU), which is one of Gavi's priority interventions in the post-pandemic period. Both bOPV and IPV are being delivered via BCU activities, and other BCU antigens are being delivered via polio programs
- However, there are lags in BCU implementation. Gavi requests GPEI's support to accelerate progress by systematically looking at opportunities to integrate BCU activities with planned polio campaigns through the end of the year. We believe that this kind of collaboration is how we will drive progress at the national level
- The Gavi replenishment summit will be celebrated next week, and funding is crucial for this collaboration.

UNICEF's Deputy Executive Director of Programs and Vice Chair of the Gavi Board, Mr. Omar Abdi

- Executive Director Russell is currently in Burkina Faso.
- This meeting is overdue. We know what needs to be done, but there are two challenges: implementation and funding.
- Ownership by governments is critical in tackling these challenges. Polio and EPI programs can support by aligning their support and the demands they place on governments, and must do so country by country – not at the global level.
- We cannot eradicate polio without addressing the challenges of the routine immunization program, especially for zero-dose children.

Gavi Board representative for the United States, Australia and the Republic of Korea, Mr. Mark Lloyd

- This meeting is overdue. Coordination is more important than ever now, in the face of all the global funding challenges.
- On behalf of our constituency, we remain committed to eradicating polio, identifying areas for improved coordination between Gavi and GPEI, and not relying on "business as usual".
- This coordinated board meeting is an important step in the right direction, and we look forward to more details on the "what" and "how" we operationalize this collaboration.
- We understand that strategic shifts will be made, as well as innovative approaches to reach missed children.
- We want to ask what new accountability mechanisms will be put in place for achieving and maintaining results, given that the current results are not where we need to be.
- The US position is that we do want increased accountability, and we want to hold all of our UN partners accountable for those results.
- We need to understand how each partnership will support national immunization programs and country ownership. We need to understand who would pay for what, how we will fix chronic issues, and what efficiencies we want to achieve.
- We encourage these details to get fleshed out and be brought to their respective boards for review and approval.
- Gavi must protect its investments in IPV-contained vaccines as part of its 6.0 Strategy. We support the increased use of hexavalent vaccines to help increase the global IPV coverage, which is a key factor for current and post-polio eradication planning.
- We encourage Gavi to share cost data and programmatic implications on IPV and Hexavalent vaccines to inform trade-off scenarios based on outcomes of replenishment.
- We need to understand how Gavi and GPEI will work together with countries to plan and fund Hexavalent vaccine introductions and scale-up plans, and how those costs will factor into the budgets of GPEI and the Gavi 6.0 Strategy. Also, what are the plans and timelines for developing and then sharing those costed scenarios with today's constituents for discussion?
- We recommend holding another joint board meeting later this year to follow up on questions and lay out an agreed-upon set of actions for the next six months.

CDC Chief of Staff, Mr. Matt Buzzelli

- CDC fully supports enhanced collaboration between Gavi and GPEI. The proposed approach reflects smart coordination, will build on what's already working, and will help us reach more children.
- This collaboration is aligned with our goals. It's efficient. It's strategic. And, most importantly, it builds on what is already working.
- CDC is especially glad to see focus on high-risk areas and better use of existing tools like the Hexavalent vaccine.

Gavi Board representative of the IFPMA constituency, Dr. Joan Benson

- IFPMA manufacturers support better alignment and joint accountability and streamlined efforts between both Boards to improve efficiency for greater impact on polio.
- Manufacturers are committed to maintaining vaccine supply pre- and post-eradication to support global partners. However, there are some areas of concern:

- Misalignment between vaccine policy and funding and the implications for supply. SAGE recommends a 3-dose regimen for IPV when a country switches to whole-cell Pertussis Hexavalent vaccine. However, Gavi only funds 2 doses of the stand-alone IPV vaccination series. There's a need to ensure equity in terms of the number of polio doses administered in low and middle income countries.
- Manufacturers require visibility and intent around the 3rd dose of IPV to ensure readiness and manufacturer supply security.

Gavi Board representative for the UK, Canada and Qatar, Dr. Ruth Lawson

- This meeting is very timely.
- Polio eradication is a global public health good. IPV and Hexavalent vaccines play an important role in the journey of eradication.
- There is full support to strengthen the alignment and synergies between the two institutions at the country level. This is the right level of ambition, and we welcome the proposal to receive feedback in October.
- We are interested in a better understanding of the work plan and receiving more details about how reporting will work across the two ecosystems. Annual updates to the boards will not be sufficient.
- It is necessary to clearly articulate how accountabilities are allocated across both partnerships, so one isn't doing the heavy lifting.
- We welcome the idea of focusing on a few countries as a starting point, but the ultimate goal should be to report and engage across all polioaffected countries, and Gavi recipient countries.

Gavi Board unaffiliated member and Chair of the Program and Policy Committee, Dr. Anne Schuchat

- The PPC is enthusiastic about this chance to review progress and is committed to performance, accountability, integration and country ownership to ensure success.

Gavi Board representative for the Gates Foundation, Mr. Greg Widmyer

- The Gates Foundation underscores its strong support for this enhanced collaboration, as well as the proposal to focus on specific geographies. This is an opportunity to be more thoughtful about integration opportunities.
- There's no more critical role for Gavi to play in polio than its role in supporting IPV and Hexavalent vaccines. If we're serious about this collaboration, then from a "do no harm" perspective it is important that we do not risk Gavi's role in IPV/Hexavalent during the recalibration discussions.
- There is strong enthusiasm from countries for the Hexavalent vaccine, since it is a win on multiple fronts: simplified schedules, easier delivery, fewer injections for kids, and an opportunity to increase IPV coverage and prevent future outbreaks of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus.
- Also, Hexavalent vaccine addresses an important inequity between higher income countries and lower income countries, which is the founding purpose of Gavi.
- We strongly support the proposal to start and focus some intention in specific geographies where the collaboration is most urgent. This also gives us an opportunity to get traction on concrete bottlenecks that exist in the collaboration.

- Accountability falls on us as board members as well. We have a critical responsibility to provide clear and consistent guidance across the Boards and to remove incentives and disincentives that impede collaboration.

Gavi Board representative for the European Commission and POB Donor Representative, Ms. Cecile Billaux

- This is not a business-as-usual context.
- It is very important to succeed with IPV and Hexavalent vaccines to ensure greater prevention and really boost immunization of population.
- We need to better understand the implications in terms of cost-benefits for the Hexavalent vaccine.
- We appreciate the country approach and the need to focus on key countries, but we would also expect to expand to all countries at some stage.
- Would like another joint board meeting, perhaps in person, in September/October once we have more visibility on the outcomes of the Gavi replenishment to see what the outcomes at the country level are.

Chair of Rotary International's PolioPlus Committee, Mr. Mike McGovern

- Polio eradication is the “Moonshot” for our organization – so important even though so difficult.
- Reminder that this is about better serving families efficiently and effectively and in a way they welcome.

Gavi Board representative for Germany and the European Constituency, Dr. Alexandra Rudolph-Seemann

- This meeting is very timely. Cooperation is no longer optional. The cooperation between Gavi and GPEI is essential to eradicating polio.
- More information on the “what” and “how” would be welcome to understand how we overcome constraints and how we integrate fully on campaigns. More details on the action plan would be welcome as well.
- We support another joint board meeting. Both boards are welcome to meet in the margins of the World Health Summit (WHS) in Berlin in October.

Gavi Board representative for Italy, Japan, Spain and New Zealand, Ms. Francesca Manno

- We share the sense of urgency and support the joint action plan.
- We should adopt a comprehensive approach. The process should really reflect the main needs that beneficiary countries express, and especially the related costs.
- We would like more information on the approach to fragile/humanitarian settings in the context of polio eradication.
- Measurement framework for the Gavi 6.0 Strategy – can we use this framework for joint action plan?

Gavi Board representative of the francophone and lusophone constituency and Minister of Health of Angola, Dr. Silvia Lutucuta

- This collaboration between Gavi and GPEI is welcome.
- To achieve the IA2030 goals requires an integrated approach, particularly in areas with high concentration of zero-dose children and that remain hotspots of poliovirus transmission.

These areas, often affected by insecurity and humanitarian crisis, call for a coordinated multi-sectorial and resilient response.

- It is imperative that we work together more closely. This includes strengthened coordination between the two programs at country level, pulling of the team and technical support, joint advocacy efforts, and align support for the introduction of Hexavalent vaccine, while considering the additional costs and implications for the countries.
- Lessons learned from the ZIP program in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel will serve as an essential guide to renewed collaboration and efficiency.

Gavi Board unaffiliated member and Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee, Mr. David Sidwell

- The business case is very clear. We will have a much better sense of Gavi's capacity when we see the results of the replenishment and the recalibration.
- Regardless of resources, working closely is a given – this new way of working across participants is crucial. Getting a joint action plan as soon as we can seems very necessary as a basis of strong accountability of the various partners.
- There needs to be a clear assignment of roles, so everyone knows exactly what they're doing.
- A measurement framework is a crucial part of this collaboration and should be established as soon as possible.

Gavi Board representative for the Vaccine industry – Developing constituency, Dr. Soleh Ayubi

- We wish to share an update on current stock: the UNICEF stockpile currently includes 550 million doses plus 2 billion of ready-to-produce vaccines. Our production capacity is 1 billion doses per year.
- We are ready to support eradication effort at the most aggressive level, as needed.

Polio Oversight Board representative for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Ziad A. Memish

- Fully supportive of this collaboration.
- We stress the important of doing things differently and thinking out of the box to improve vaccination coverage.
- We need operational plans and cost estimates to ensure this collaboration will not compromise the budget of GPEI.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Gavi, Dr. Sania Nishtar

- We heard resounding support for this approach to collaboration.
- We want to reassure all that, as part of LEAP reform, we realize that "business as usual" is not an option.
- We realize that there's an urgent imperative to exploit synergy, and therefore we are changing the way we work. Drastically. We are changing our country operating model. We are revamping analytics as well as the accountability frameworks that underpin analytics. And we are making far-reaching changes in the Secretariat, so that we are more suited to working frugally in these resource-constrained times, but with enhanced accountability. As part of that we are committed to deep, meaningful engagement and collaboration with sister agencies and initiatives, which is where collaboration with the GPEI is so very crucial.
- You have given us some very important steers with regard to the upcoming strategy retreat of Gavi, and your preference to convene later in the year is noted.

Gavi Board Chair, Prof. José Manuel Barroso – closing remarks

- There is a real commitment and convergence from all institutions to increase efforts to eradicate polio.
- There is a strong call for the proposed plan of action to include clear measurements of effectiveness, accountability and performance. Both boards will be accountable for monitoring these indicators.

Polio Oversight Board (POB) Chair and president of the Global Development Division of the Gates Foundation, Mr. Chris Elias - closing remarks

- This has been an incredibly rich discussion.
- We heard broad support for collaboration priorities, and some helpful suggestions and requests for more detail and follow-up.
- We heard a fair amount of consensus around the importance of continuing the efforts on IPV and Hexavalent vaccines as a way to protect all children against all variants of the poliovirus.
- It is really important that we seize the momentum and plan a follow up meeting of the two boards. Two potential options for the discussion include incorporating it into the in-person POB meeting in New York on 21 September ahead of UNGA or convening around the World Health Summit in Berlin in October.)
- In addition to the proposed annual reporting to the PPC and the POB, we should consider having a standing agenda item on this topic at least annually for a combined discussion of the boards.
- All board members will continue to support and monitor progress closely. We want to hear if you're not seeing progress on the ground and we ensure we'll use our role as Chairs to ensure robust governance discussions both within and between institutions as necessary.