

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

2 December 2025 | 12:00-13:30 CET

Note for the Record

Attendees

- **Gavi Board Attendees:** Sania Nishtar, Omar Abdi, George Laryea-Adjei, Cécile Billaux, Kristen Chenier, Awa Marie Coll Seck, Leila Gharagozloo Pakkala, Leone Gianturco, Mohamed Jama, Kent Ranson, Ruth Lawson, Silvia Lutucuta, Bvudzai Magadzire, Kate O’Brien, Marit Viktoria Pettersen, Alexandra Rudolph-Seemann, Anne Schuchat, Anna Sedgley, Deena Shiff, David Sidwell, IIn Susanti, Onei Uetela, Tandin Wangchuk, Rhoda Wanyenze, Greg Widmyer, Anna Halén, Lena Nanushyan, Mark Llyod, Syed Mustafa Kamal
- **POB Member Attendees:** Chris Elias (POB Chair, GF); Omar Abdi (UNICEF); Sania Nishtar (Gavi); Mike McGovern (Rotary); Ziad Memish (KSA); Martin Seychell (European Commission).

Key Takeaways

- There is a firm and dedicated commitment from the GAVI Secretariat, GAVI Alliance and GPEI and EPI partners to achieve both polio eradication and immunization systems strengthening through better integrated operations.
- Ongoing support to the four priority countries (Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Pakistan) is essential to: a) achieve polio eradication globally; b) integrate GAVI, GPEI and EPI plans and operations for greater impact and efficiency; and c) document best practices and lessons learned to support other countries.
- There needs to be greater attention and guidance to support integration efforts at the subnational level. This includes the planning and implementation of multi-antigen vaccination campaigns where possible.
- Global-level partners must continue the conversation on how to manage and respond to miscommunication and misinformation around vaccines.
- The pivot from a global to country action plans was supported. In addition, donors called for something above country action plans to provide a global steer to countries and a focus on monitoring, accountability and lessons learned.

Next steps

Activity	Purpose	Owner	Timeframe
Develop and implement joint GPEI-Gavi-EPI plans in 2-4 priority countries	Utilize joint GPEI-Gavi-EPI plans to strengthen collaboration and commitment to reach zero-dose children, eradicate polio and sustain a polio-free world	GPEI-Gavi-EPI country teams	Ongoing
Monitor country progress against joint action plans in 2-4 priority countries	Ensure accountability mechanisms are established to track country progress	Gavi-GPEI-EPI global partners	Ongoing
Document and share best practices and lessons learned	Enhance the quality of and identify additional opportunities	Gavi-GPEI- EPI global partners	Ongoing

on integrated campaigns and RI strengthening	for multi-antigen campaigns and RI strengthening activities		
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Annex: Discussion Highlights & Remarks

Vice Chair Gavi Board/UNICEF, Omar Abdi

- This meeting builds on the strong mission set in June to strengthen collaboration between Gavi and GEPI to achieve Polio eradication and common immunization goals.
- This second meeting of the joint boards is a moment to take stock, strengthen our approach, and ensure our collective efforts are directed where they are most needed.
- Our meeting is timely, as both Gavi 6.0 and the GPEI Global Action Plans set a clear expectation for more coherent, mutually reinforcing ways of working.
- Together, they signal our shared commitment to support countries in a more aligned, predictable, and accountable manner.
- With many countries moving to self-financing IPV from 2026 to 2028, coordinated advocacy and planning are more important than ever.

POB Chair/Gates Foundation, Chris Elias

- I'm pleased that we were able to build upon the important discussion that we started in June around strengthening the collaboration between GAVI and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.
- Despite their successes in a historically challenging context, both Gavi and GPEI could not avoid some very challenging decisions around reductions to programming and staffing over the past several months.
- Enhanced collaboration is becoming increasingly important in this constrained environment.
- Today we hear updates on this front from Nigeria, Pakistan, and other countries, and look for opportunities to grow and sustain the collaboration between Gavi and GPEI going forward.

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

- GAVI and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative already work extremely closely at various levels on IPV and hexavalent vaccines and to support joint campaigns.
- Of late, we have stepped up this collaboration.
 - This is the second joint board meeting this year.
 - A leadership team has been put together from representatives of all participating organizations.
 - Country-level action plans are being developed.
 - IPV and hexavalent vaccines are part of the protected list in GAVI's recalibration exercise.
 - An IPV indicator has been included in GAVI's routine metrics.
- Current challenges include limited coordination and fragmentation.
- This collaboration is an opportunity to address some of these challenges.
- We work with countries to expedite this holistic application of the planning and implementation process, with a specific focus on polio eradication.

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

- Fully transfer capacities and knowledge to the local level.

- Local actors must be committed to the integration process and become involved in the planning process.

European Commission, Martin Seychell

- A more systematic and structured approach is needed (ex., regular updates from both Secretariates on the collaboration outside the framework of Board meetings)
- A more pragmatic approach to integration at the country level is a prerequisite to understand how to better steer at global level. This includes:
 - Pivot from a global action plan to tailored country action plans.
 - Include alignment and integration between GPEI and GAVI programming and countries' routine immunization programs.
 - Maintain a consistent approach in each country.
 - Ensure that countries' progress feeds into realistic budgetary and programmatic planning.
- Suggestion to organize a joint retreat to allow for more in-depth discussions.
- Systematic documentation of lessons learned to further roll out the collaboration.
- Integration should go beyond measles and polio – consider malaria, meningitis, yellow fever.
- Concern on the proposed funding reduction for GAVI's Fragile & Humanitarian immunization approach, which is critical to deliver vaccines in many of the GAVI-GPEI convergence countries.
- Concern about GPEI's reduced investment in outbreak countries.

Germany, Alexandra Rudolph-Seemann

- How large are the cost savings of integration and joint campaigning?
- On the campaign's integration, we have heard mixed results on the ground: where are the bottlenecks?
- Consider if GPEI can plan campaigns further ahead to align to Gavi planning cycles.
- Country action plans are better suited to further integration than one global plan. How will monitoring and accountability from the global level be implemented?

Gates Foundation, Greg Widmyer

- Essential that we were able to preserve the support for IPV and hexavalent vaccines since this is one of the key contributions that GAVI can make to the polio eradication efforts.
- Fundamentally, we need to work differently to connect the work of immunization and polio teams at the strategic, operational, and institutional levels.
- We need to be deliberate, concrete, and intentional about what can happen next:
 - Clear guidance to stakeholders in the field for how this collaboration is reflected in GAVI's holistic planning process that countries will start to undertake next year.
 - GPEI's involvement in the process recently requested by GAVI's Program and Policy Committee (PPC) to develop a more holistic approach to campaign effectiveness.
 - The leadership of GAVI and GPEI transmit the directive on coordination to countries and address on-the-ground Polio/EPI collaboration challenges where present (ex., Afghanistan).
 - Goodwill for collaboration at the global level should translate to the local level through joint shared communication, webinars, communications plans, etc.

Canada, Kristen Chenier

- Agree on the priority areas of action, on the importance of more granular country action plans, and on the global monitoring and accountability process.
- The integration agenda feels like an old agenda that we've been trying to advance for some time.
- Canada has high expectations for this agenda for its:
 - Efficiency in a time of scarce resources
 - Advancement of polio eradication objectives
 - New thinking framework

DCVMN representative, Lin Susanti

- DCVMN fully supports efforts in achieving this enhanced collaboration, including the integration of OPV and measles and rubella.
- The issue of budget gaps may need to be carefully reviewed.

Independent individual, Awa Marie Coll Seck

- Need to see progress linked to indicators.
- Unclear guidance from the global level needs to be rectified.
- Next steps for collaboration at the community level:
 - Continue outreach and catch-up vaccination operations
 - Address misinformation through a well-designed strategy.
 - Improve visibility, monitoring, and evaluation in fragile and humanitarian geographies.
 - Provide both technical and financial support to this collaboration effort.

Independent individual, Anne Schuchat

- GPEI emphasizes surveillance, but this topic is not in the Gavi space. With the current global architecture and countries' challenges, there is a risk that performance will decline. The country approach proposed to the two boards should integrate the surveillance component as well.
- Share concerns about misinformation and agree that this topic must be on future agendas.

United Kingdom, Ruth Lawson

- Collaboration between GAVI and GPEI has been an agenda item for a long time, so a very high level of ambition must be maintained going forward.
- Welcome the idea of moving to targeted country roadmaps. However, there is a need to:
 - Collect lessons learned collected and shared them with other countries.
 - Specify the endgame (i.e., the final goal) once the enhanced collaboration is in place.
 - Specify the areas where we should focus and improve over the longer term.
 - Clarify where functions sit, how we can evolve, and how we make sure that critical functions are not lost in the transition.
- If we move away from a global roadmap, we still need to develop functional areas with clear goals and timelines.

UNICEF, George Laryea-Adjei

- Integration needs to focus on national and subnational plans.

- The two Boards need to collaborate to:
 - Protect immunization budgets.
 - Continue advocacy for IPV and hexavalent vaccines.
 - Integrate immunization and polio activities.

Civil Society Organizations (CSO), Onei Uetela

- This collaboration is helping us:
 - Reach more children sustainably.
 - Build resilience within national immunization programs.
 - Enable structured engagement with community leaders and community health workers, including as vaccinators, in undeserved and fragile subnational areas.
- Integrating campaigns and routine immunization strengthening remain the two most impactful priorities in our perspective, and we fully support maintaining them as core focus through 2026.
- Community engagement must be woven into both priorities to address insecurity, access constraints, and misinformation. Suggestion is to intentionally incorporate CSOs and humanitarian engagement mechanisms into the joint GAVI-GPI planning.
- Country-driven, context-specific planning must be backed up by clear global accountability and strong monitoring framework.

Implementing countries: Indonesia & Bhutan, Tandin Wangchuk

- Ministries of Health can contribute to this initiative by spearheading the joint GAVI-GPEI Action Plan development and overseeing its implementation.
- Country-level review of the Joint Action Plan on a regular basis will be very helpful.

World Health Organization, Kate O'Brien

- Misinformation is a growing issue and can be mitigated only by local actors. Country programs need support to adapt global tools to very local and specific issues. WHO and UNICEF will publish a toolkit in 2026.
- We are collecting examples of poor collaboration and taking action, but we also need shared accountability and shared communication channels to discuss these issues with countries.
- Lessons learned are being collected in the 4 priority countries, so other countries have the benefit of that experience.
- The leadership group will have rotating chairs.
- The change seen here is an absolutely firm and dedicated commitment from all the partners, the Gavi Secretariat, all of the partners around GPEI, all of the partners in the Gavi Alliance.

World Health Organization, Jamal Ahmed

- Agree on focusing heavily on subnational levels.
- Cost savings thanks to integration amount to US\$0.30-0.40 per child.
- Advanced campaign planning can be challenging because many planned responses are outbreak related.
- Misinformation must also be fought at the global level.