

Gavi Alliance Programme and Policy Committee Meeting

12 November 2021

Virtual meeting

1. Chair's report

- 1.1 Finding a quorum of members present, the meeting commenced at 14.02 Geneva time on 12 November 2021. Helen Rees, Programme and Policy Committee (PPC) Chair, chaired the meeting.
- 1.2 The Chair gave a particular welcome to Awa Marie Coll Seck who was attending her first formal PPC meeting.
- 1.3 As the PPC Charter allows for any Board or Alternate Board members to observe Committee meetings, the PPC Chair acknowledged Megan Cain (Canada/Italy/New Zealand/Spain/Switzerland) and Jeremy Konyndyk, Alternate Board Member (United States/Australia/Japan/Republic of Korea) who would attend for some of the meeting. She also noted that she had invited David Sidwell, Board Member and Audit and Finance Committee (AFC) Chair, to join the meeting and contribute to the discussion on COVAX in light of the discussions held to date at the AFC.
- 1.4 In the context of ongoing efforts to strengthen the relationship between the PPC and the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC), the Chair welcomed James Hargreaves, EAC Chair.
- 1.5 The Chair noted that she had also extended an exceptional invitation to Chikwe Ihekweazu, a recognised epidemiologist, to attend the meeting as an observer for Item 3 on disease surveillance and diagnostics, in order to provide context on that item and to be available to answer any questions that might come up within the remit of his expertise.
- 1.6 Standing declarations of interest were tabled to the Committee (Doc 01a in the Committee pack).
- 1.7 Seth Berkley, CEO, provided opening remarks, noting that there was enormous interest in COVAX and that the Secretariat would strive to communicate even more actively than it has been. He outlined the process to review various components of the 2022 strategy for COVAX, which has included deliberations by the PPC, AFC, Governance Committee, and Board on different pieces of the strategy and associated resourcing.

2. COVAX: Key Strategic Issues

- 2.1 Aurélia Nguyen, Managing Director, Office of the COVAX Facility, introduced this item (Doc 02) focusing on the following key elements: i) progress to date and targets for the remainder of 2021, ii) Gavi's role in COVID-19 vaccination in 2022, iii) the COVAX Facility's role in vaccine procurement in 2022, and iv) management of uncertainties in 2022.
- 2.2 Thabani Maphosa, Managing Director, Country Programmes, elaborated on the role of the Gavi Alliance in COVID-19 vaccine delivery to date. He outlined the current funding structure to support COVID-19 vaccines delivery and provided an overview of the Alliance's role moving into 2022. This would focus on maintaining the critical enabling functions through technical assistance (TA) as well as continuing to reinforce ultra-cold chain (UCC) and other cold chain equipment (CCE) where needed; and providing targeted financial support to countries with inadequate access to other financing.
- 2.3 David Sidwell, Chair of the AFC, described the engagement of the AFC over the course of approximately 40 hours of discussions on risk management related to COVAX, including through nine dedicated COVAX-focused meetings. He noted that the AFC had applied two key principles in those discussions: i) that financial risk to Gavi should be minimal; and ii) that risks should be thoroughly understood, and to mitigate them where possible. He reviewed the substantial progress on risk management over the course of the year and the critical engagement of senior leadership and additional resources in the form of both advisers drawn from Board members and of contracted expertise in risk management from Citibank.
- 2.4 He flagged several important achievements, such as working with UNICEF to put insurance for delivery risk in place and the simplification of the revised participation model for Self-Financing Participants (SFP2).
- 2.5 Finally, he noted that the AFC had found it useful in 2021 in such a fast moving and complex landscape to map out AFC decision making for the coming six months, and that he was hopeful in 2022 that the AFC would be able to return to a more regular cadence of meetings. He also remarked that from his perspective, the strategy will have to be dynamic as processes will be new and will change over time.

Discussion

- PPC members expressed their appreciation for the additional detail that had been provided in the paper for this meeting.
- PPC members advised that the COVAX strategy for 2022 that will support the AMC91 countries¹ will need to be enabling, country-focused, and flexible, with a focus on equity and the most vulnerable, and will need to move quickly to deliver doses.

¹ the 92 AMC-eligible economies, excluding India

- The Committee also reinforced that it will be important to ensure that the approach is context-specific, based on data and analytics, and that roadmaps are drawn up.
- Several PPC members reflected on the question of country delivery and expressed concern that some countries might not be able to achieve the ambitious 70% WHO Global Vaccination Target by mid-2022, whether because of country readiness or because of supply or demand issues. The Secretariat outlined its approach to support countries in achieving their own targets and the tight cross-Alliance coordination processes in place to unblock any identified bottlenecks.
- The Committee suggested that the Secretariat and partners should be allowed additional flexibility to move quickly and nimbly, akin to the previous flexibilities extended by the Board in May and June 2020, and that the Secretariat should continue to strive for continuous improvement of processes in this endeavour.
- PPC members indicated that several areas would be useful to be clarified to support the Board's deliberations, including: i) the fundamental role of the Advance Market Commitment (AMC) in 2022 given that this may have shifted since its creation; ii) more information on how the pandemic vaccine pool will be managed; iii) an update on the operationalisation of the Humanitarian Buffer; iv) more details on cost-sharing, which was interim in 2021, but needs to be elaborated; v) more detail on cost of delivery and what the Secretariat is doing differently to approach the urgency of this situation; vi) more on donations and non-COVAX supply such as the African Vaccine Acquisition Trust (AVAT); and how that coordination is helping countries to resolve supply; and vii) that rather than presenting only one scenario for 2022 based on a set of assumptions around supply, delivery capacity or vaccine demand, alternative scenarios should be presented, drawing on different sets of assumptions.
- PPC members asked that updates be provided frequently and prior to the next regularly scheduled PPC meeting in May 2022, and that the PPC should be used as a sounding board by the Secretariat.
- With respect to any reshaping of COVAX governance in 2022, it was requested that particular attention be paid to making it more inclusive and incorporating more country voices. The Secretariat noted this request.
- In response to a question about a new formulation of Pfizer doses, it was clarified that it is expected that the new formulation will provide an extended shelf life but will not rule out the need for UCC equipment.

Decision 1

The Gavi Alliance Programme and Policy Committee **recommended** to the Gavi Alliance Board that it:

- a) **Approve** the Gavi Alliance strategic direction for 2022 of supporting AMC91 countries toward achieving their individual COVID-19 vaccination coverage ambitions as set out in their national targets and ambitions, in view of the WHO Global Vaccination Target of 70% by mid-2022 and taking into account sources of supply beyond COVAX;

- b) **Approve**, subject to funding availability for the COVAX AMC, the COVAX Facility's approach to procurement of COVID-19 vaccine for 2022, focusing on supporting lower-income countries dependent upon the COVAX Facility for assurance of supply, and through the establishment of a Pandemic Vaccine Pool to manage risks given the significant uncertainties (e.g. variants, need for boosters, need for additional doses for primary series);
- c) **Approve** the Alliance's role in the delivery of COVID-19 vaccines in 2022 as laid out in Section 5 to Doc 02;
- d) **Delegate** to the Secretariat the authority to allot the full US\$ 799 million of COVID-19 vaccine delivery funding as per Figure 4 to Doc 02 (page 10) with flexible application of the Programme Funding policy including waiving the requirement for independent review, utilising existing programmatic and fiduciary risk mitigation mechanisms such as those used in emergency and humanitarian contexts on a no regrets basis;
- e) **Request** the Secretariat and Alliance partners, coordinating through CRD (Country Readiness and Delivery), to work with existing and additional partners and countries on rapidly enhancing and accelerating vaccination throughput, including through mass vaccination and reaching hard-to-reach populations; and
- f) **Request** that the Secretariat update the PPC and Board before the end of June 2022.

3. Disease Surveillance and Diagnostics in Gavi 5.0

- 3.1 Lee Hampton, Senior Specialist, Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning, presented a proposal for the procurement and distribution of diagnostic test kits, reagents, supplies, and equipment for five diseases (cholera, typhoid, meningococcus, measles, and rubella) in countries eligible for Gavi new vaccine support through a diagnostic procurement mechanism based on Gavi's existing application, review, and approval processes (Doc 03).
- 3.2 As this item was a follow-up to a discussion at the October 2021 PPC meeting, Dr Hampton outlined how the suggestions from that earlier discussion had been built into the proposal, including in revisions to the proposed budget.
- 3.3 Seth Berkley, CEO, noted that the Alliance will be spending more than US\$ 1.6 billion on the vaccines targeted in this proposal and that countries will need tools to deliver on these five vaccines. He reiterated that this proposal fits closely with Gavi's strategy for Gavi 5.0 and has been coordinated with other partners.
- 3.4 Chikwe Ihekweazu, a recognised epidemiologist who until recently was the Director General at the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, was invited to provide some remarks about this proposal. He emphasised the significant impact on the public health infrastructure in Nigeria of the support provided by Gavi for yellow fever diagnostics in terms of empowering the country to think about yellow fever as a disease that fit into a clinical perspective, building confidence as a result of a shortened diagnostic pathway, and that led the country to take ownership of

management of the disease. Noting that the diagnostic landscape has expanded significantly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, he indicated that he could see an opportunity in this proposal to build on the expansion of laboratory and diagnostics capabilities at the country level and have a real impact.

Discussion

- PPC members expressed appreciation for the additional level of detail and analysis that had been provided in the paper and indicated that the proposal was now more clearly linked to the Gavi 5.0 strategy.
- The Committee asked for further detail to be provided in the paper for the Board at its meeting in November-December 2021 on: i) how this proposal would span across both Gavi 5.0 and Gavi 6.0; ii) on the global, regional and country breakdown of support; iii) on how this proposal fits within the broader market shaping strategy; iv) the criteria that would be used to select partners. PPC members also noted that implementation of this proposal will require strategic engagement of partners, specifically requesting collaboration with the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND). PPC members noted that this proposal must be treated primarily as an opportunity for country capacity building.
- PPC members noted that this proposal would also contribute to the fight against the global concern of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), particularly in regard to typhoid fever. The proposed investment in diagnostic tests would also allow for the detection of disease incidence within the population, contributing to better understanding of the diseases and the impact of vaccination. Given the value of blood culture testing for typhoid fever, PPC members noted that any alternatives should be carefully considered and requested information on other types of tests for typhoid.
- Dr Hampton clarified that if the Board approves this proposal, a key next step will be to draw up target product profiles specifying what characteristics tests will need to have to warrant Gavi procurement. This process will include many partners in developing those target product profiles, including identifying testing technology options. It was also clarified that the main goal of this investment was to make fit-for-purpose diagnostic tools available that would greatly ease countries' efforts to increase their capacity to detect the diseases covered by this proposal. It was further clarified that FIND had been involved in the Gavi yellow fever diagnostics initiative and that the Gavi Secretariat had been in discussions with FIND on how it might collaborate on a broader Gavi diagnostics initiative.
- A minority position was expressed by the PPC member representing the Norway/Finland/Netherlands/Sweden constituency. She suggested that it would be beneficial to have further discussion at the Board level on the institutional question of whether Gavi is the right organisation to be making this investment. It was suggested that this might be an appropriate topic to be raised at the next Board retreat in April 2022.
- The Secretariat noted the PPC's request for frequent updates to the Committee, including in follow-up at the 2022 Board retreat, if appropriate.

Decision 2

The Gavi Alliance Programme and Policy Committee **recommended** to the Gavi Alliance Board that it:

- a) **Approve** an amount of up to US\$ 27 million during 2022-2025 for costs related to the procurement and distribution of diagnostic test kits, reagents, supplies, and equipment for cholera, typhoid, meningococcus, measles, and rubella in countries eligible for Gavi new vaccine support through a diagnostic procurement mechanism based on Gavi's existing application, review, and approval processes;
- b) **Approve** the additional provision of up to US\$ 17 million in funds through the Partners' Engagement Framework (PEF) during 2022-2025, to support diagnostic test validation, guidance development, multi-country technical assistance, and quality assurance to support effective, efficient, and equitable use of Gavi supported vaccines in countries eligible for Gavi new vaccine support as well as up to US\$ 2 million for Gavi Secretariat coordination, monitoring, and operation of Gavi's application, review, and approval processes related to diagnostic tools procurement support during 2022-2025;
- c) **Note** the potential inclusion of assessments of disease-specific diagnostic needs in planning of future Gavi vaccine support proposals to the Board, and potential inclusion of recommendations on addressing disease-specific diagnostic needs in these funding proposals; and
- d) **Request** the Gavi Secretariat to report back to the PPC and Board on progress in 2024.

Will Schluter (R&THI), Lubna Hashmat (CSO), Ephrem Lemango (UNICEF), and Kate O'Brien (WHO) recused themselves and did not vote on Decision Two b) above.

4. Review of decisions

- 4.1 Joanne Goetz, Head, Governance, reviewed the decision language with the Committee which was approved by them.

5. Any other business

- 5.1 Helen Rees, PPC Chair, thanked the PPC members for the rich discussions.
- 5.2 She extended sincere thanks once again to those PPC members who were attending their last PPC meeting for their valuable contributions during their tenure, including Ahmed Abdallah, Joan Benson, Lubna Hashmat, Violaine Mitchell and Will Schluter.

- 5.3 After determining there was no further business, the meeting was brought to a close.

Mrs Joanne Goetz
Secretary to the Meeting

Attachment A

Participants

Committee Members

- Helen Rees, Chair
- Ahmed Abdallah
- Edna Yolani Batres
- Joan Benson
- Bernhard Braune
- Awa Marie Coll Seck
- Naomi Dumbrell
- Susan Elden
- Lubna Hashmat
- Violaine Mitchell
- Ephrem Lemango
- Kate O'Brien
- Kelechi Ohiri
- Michael Kent Ranson
- William Schluter
- Vikas Sheel
- Karin Westerberg
- Seth Berkley, Chief Executive Officer
- Alejandro Cravioto

Regrets

- Sai Prasad

Other Board members attending

- Megan Cain
- David Sidwell
- Jeremy Konyndyk

Other guests

- Chikwe Ihekweazu (Agenda Item 3)

Observers

- James Hargreaves, Chair, Gavi Evaluation Advisory Committee
- Muluken Desta, Special Adviser to the AFRO Anglophone constituency
- Ruzan Gyurjyan, Special Adviser to the EURO constituency
- Zaeem UI Haaq, Special Adviser to the EMRO constituency
- Rolando Pinel, Special Adviser to the PAHO constituency
- Oulech Taha, Special Adviser to the AFRO Francophone/Lusophone constituency
- Stella Villares, Special Adviser to the Board Chair

Gavi Secretariat

- Anuradha Gupta
- Johannes Ahrendts
- Pascal Barollier
- Hannah Burris
- Lindsey Cole
- Santiago Cornejo
- Assietou Diouf
- Joanne Goetz
- Lee Hampton (Agenda Item 3)
- Hope Johnson
- Alex de Jonquières
- Brenda Killen
- Ian MacTavish
- Thabani Maphosa
- Meegan Murray-Lopez
- Aurélia Nguyen
- Tokunbo Oshin
- Marie-Ange Saraka-Yao
- Antara Sinha
- Stephen Sosler
- Daniel Thornton (Agenda Item 2)
- Sanne Wendes (Agenda Item 2)
- Jacob van der Blij