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GAVI Alliance Advocacy and Communications Strategy

Background

Advocacy and communications are critical to ensuring that the GAVI Alliance's life-saving work is sustainable and effective. This document outlines the key objectives, audiences, operating environments and elements of an Alliance-wide strategy. It raises challenges and lessons learned from past advocacy and communications work while providing a strategic focus to future endeavors.

All board members whether individual, institutional or constituency representatives are equal partners or stakeholders in the GAVI Alliance. Yet while all board members are equal, each brings unique expertise and competencies. Many represent organisations with enormous institutional depth and capacities for the Alliance to draw on. First and foremost, the true owners of the Alliance are the implementing countries themselves. GAVI's work supports and is led by the governments and civil society and private sector actors responsible for developing and delivering immunisation programmes and health services in their countries. Public and private donors, on the other hand, are the key to providing necessary financial support; the World Bank has a unique financial advisory and management role; and UNICEF and WHO respectively play key programmatic and standard setting roles. GAVI's public-private partnership is invigorated by vaccine manufacturers and civil society and technical and research constituencies. Together, all Alliance partners contribute to shaping the policies and strategic direction of our work.

The Alliance includes members with strong and successful experience in advocating for policies and programmes aimed at saving children's lives and improving people's health through expanding immunisation in developing countries. Working collectively on advocacy and communications has proved challenging and produced mixed results. For example, the phase one evaluation of the GAVI Alliance reported a problem with the lack of shared understanding of member responsibilities and a perception that UNICEF had underperformed in its expected role in coordinating Alliance advocacy efforts. Other experiences, such as the Pneumo and Rota ADIPs¹ and the Hib Initiative, have demonstrated success in raising awareness about the diseases and generating interest in vaccines within developing countries. Specific work with donors and other partners on IFFIm and the AMC have also proven successful. The Alliance should continue to use and build on such experience to promote the broader Alliance communications and advocacy objectives.

In more recent years, the Secretariat has taken the main responsibility for advocacy and media communications. It has focused on specific support for Alliance policies and programmes and collaborated to varying degrees with Alliance partners and others on broader advocacy and communications efforts. Examples of successful collaboration

¹ Accelerated Development and Introduction Plan

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include the 2005 launch of the GIVS costing study at the GAVI partners meeting, regular collective press outreach with ministries of health, WHO and UNICEF, partnering with the World Bank on IFFIm promotion, with the AMC donor group on media communications and most recently with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation on the *Living Proof* initiative.²

At the global level, the Secretariat has worked with other health organisations and advocates to sustain high-level political attention on health and development issues and, within that, to promote the power of vaccination and the successes of the GAVI Alliance business model. GAVI is recognised and increasingly referenced as a leader in global development aid with a reputation for successful innovation in financing and in country-led programme approaches. GAVI's focus on results defines the Alliance as a 'go to' organisation for success. There is potential to further leverage this reputation to the mutual benefit of the Alliance and its individual partners.

Concurrently, the Alliance has applied new and significant resources to advocacy and communications at the country and regional levels. To date, this effort has been aimed at accelerating new and underused vaccine uptake and improving the conditions for successful health outcomes through enabling evidence-based decision-making by countries. This work largely has been implemented through WHO and UNICEF country and regional offices and through the ADIPs and Hib Initiative. It will be continued and strengthened through the new Accelerated Vaccine Introduction initiative (AVI).

Challenges remain

It is difficult to coordinate activities among many partners. Each Alliance member organisation has its own advocacy and communications approach and there is often insufficient human resource capacity to coordinate or invest in Alliance-wide activities. Although bilateral coordination has improved over the recent past, consistent collective work has been difficult to achieve. The Global Advocacy Group³ has been a forum to build trust, share information and develop common messaging among partners. But it has had varying levels of engagement and been less successful in implementing collective activities. Finally, a significant amount of advocacy and communications outreach does not include the involvement and perspective of the Alliance's most important members: the implementing countries themselves.

Greater coordination and alignment are critical. The on-going global financial crisis will significantly impact all development and humanitarian organisations. With a more constrained donor environment, competition for support will increase. The GAVI Alliance needs to be more strategic, focused, and consistent in its advocacy and communicate outreach.

² A new Gates Foundation-led initiative aimed at raising awareness about global health successes.

³ Members include WHO, UNICEF, World Bank, the Gates Foundation, IFPMA, the Hib Initiative, PneumoADIP and Path.

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To address these challenges and to ensure that efforts are focused on GAVI's particular added value and business niche, this advocacy and communications strategy proposes to:

- Foster a country-based approach to its outreach by promoting voices from implementing countries;
- Further leverage the collaborative efforts among Alliance partners and facilitate increased coordination around shared interests, successes and challenges;
- Strengthen linkages among global, regional and country level advocacy and communications through the AVI and closer coordination among Alliance partners at the global and country levels;
- Leverage private sector actors and voices, from entrepreneurs to health practitioners to leading corporations and philanthropic foundations;
- Make better use of the wealth of expertise and influence of Board members, former Board members and other key individuals in the broader Alliance family.

Objectives

Advocacy and communications outreach help to empower and ensure the success of GAVI's mission. Outreach is accomplished in two ways: through the direct support of fundraising efforts to help ensure increased income to meet rising country demand; and, by helping to shape a public policy environment most conducive to the successful pursuit of GAVI's mission. Therefore, the strategic objectives are to:

- A. *Support fundraising for Alliance programmes*** by targeting markets and audiences where there is the most potential for increased donor contributions, as defined in the GAVI Alliance government and private fundraising strategies.
- B. *Influence international development policies and priorities*** by leveraging GAVI's reputation in development aid to help maintain the prominence of the health sector (including recognition of the power and cost-effectiveness of immunisation), and by promoting policies that best facilitate successful GAVI programme outcomes.

These objectives are fully aligned with GAVI's fundraising strategy and are considered fundamental to the Alliance's mission (i.e., if they are not achieved, the work of the Alliance would be put in jeopardy).

Operating environment

Within the world of immunisation, GAVI's product niche is new and underused vaccines – GAVI does not seek to be 'all things immunisation'. Its business model and innovative programming and financing approaches have wide appeal in the global health sector and, beyond that, in the development aid community. This presents the opportunity to broaden our communications efforts by leveraging GAVI's reputation to promote the power of vaccination to improving health and long term development.

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In this way, Alliance advocacy and communications can help build a broader constituency of support, adding value to the particular as well as the collective interests of Alliance members. In addition, by being seen to add value to the public policy arena of international development, GAVI's reputation amongst those who influence the allocation of development aid budgets is increased. GAVI's added value is extended beyond the direct beneficial impact of its programmes.

There are three principal operating environments for GAVI advocacy and communications outreach. Within each environment, there are advocates, allies and critics. Maximising impact and mitigating criticism entail proactively aligning messages in each environment and often across environments. The Secretariat seeks the Board's confirmation that the Alliance's advocacy and communications activities be focused in three principal environments:

- The broadest environment is the field of international development and aid, which includes international bodies (e.g. UN, G8, G20); relevant government agencies (e.g. development, planning, finance and foreign affairs); think tanks, non-government aid groups and other civil society organisations; philanthropic organisations and individuals and media engaged in the broader development issues. There is a growing private sector direct engagement in the development aid policy space. GAVI, as a public-private partnership, would actively seek to promote and engage private sector actors.
- A second, more specific environment is the health sector. This includes health ministries, public health professionals, academic and non-government organisations, specialised media and international health agencies. GAVI's approach here is to ensure immunisation continues to be recognised as a high value intervention; to collaborate in promoting health as a driver of development; and to ensure greater integration of effort among health development actors for greater efficiency and more effective aid.
- The third and most specialised environment is the immunisation field, which includes EPI managers, other public health professionals (e.g. paediatricians), vaccine manufacturers, scientists and researchers, child survival advocates, disease interest groups, further specialised media and even "natural allies" such as parents. GAVI's particular niche in this domain is financing new and underused vaccines and fostering innovation to expand immunisation services in developing countries.

Target markets and audiences

The primary target markets are GAVI donor and prospective donor countries as identified in the fundraising strategy. Except in the case of GAVI's communications activities in support of private fundraising in the United States, prioritisation of these countries will depend on changing factors such as a donor government's involvement

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with GAVI, issues that are germane only to that market, or political shifts that may require concentrated emphasis over a specific period of time.

The following are recognised key audiences within markets defined by fundraising strategy:

- *Parliamentarians in donor markets* - While GAVI often has strong recognition with government leadership and senior officials, it is important to broaden this base within the political and decision-making arena. This is especially necessary in markets where elections are imminent or particular GAVI champions may move on; building wider constituencies within parliaments can mitigate the risks associated with political changes and can facilitate further relationships with other potential donors.
- *Civil society* - Civil society organisations continue to increase their influence in international development policy and priority setting and the trend towards greater consultation and inclusiveness in decision-making further empowers their voice. Recent experience suggests there is considerable potential for leveraging this influence further. GAVI also has a comparative advantage in creating opportunities for immunisation and child health advocates to join and influence other civil society forums.
- *Private philanthropists* – High net worth individuals and committed lower dollar level donors increasingly seek to follow in the footsteps of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and become members of an organisation with demonstrated global impact and a high return on investment. Likewise, there is budding interest in GAVI's work among leading corporations and foundations that bring to the table significant resources to raise the profile of immunisation. Options to be explored include co-branded fundraising and joint communications and advocacy efforts.
- *Key development, health, humanitarian, and financial reporters in donor markets and implementing countries* – The Alliance has solid relationships with a wide range of very influential reporters who regularly report positively on the Alliance's work. These reporters will be further cultivated and additional reporters, particularly in implementing countries, will be identified vis-à-vis our outreach to the other target audiences. Secondly, relationship building with other types of influential media beyond print newspapers will be strengthened. This includes seeking new allies among TV broadcasters, highly specialised publications and websites and blogs focused on immunisation, health and development.

Key elements to the strategy

For the strategy to be successful, it must include the following elements:

- ***Country voices first.*** A client-driven communications approach fits well with the programmatic and policy ethos of the Alliance. By better coordinating with

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government ministries and other partners in implementing countries (including local offices of multilateral agency partners, the paediatric sector and grass-roots civil society organisations), we can ensure that the most important and most credible voices are heard. Integration with the AVI country- and regional-level advocacy and communications work will help to achieve this but stronger coordination with partners will also be required.

- ***Define the Alliance through the work of its partners.*** The Secretariat recognises the importance of communicating the unique roles and expertise of its partners as the way to define the Alliance. GAVI's added value is demonstrated through developing countries leading the collective action of public and private agencies and actors in the Alliance.
- ***Collective ownership of advocacy and communications among Alliance partners.*** The Secretariat cannot lead new collective efforts unless there is full ownership among Alliance partners and Board members. New efforts and organisational arrangements are needed in order to deepen engagement among Alliance members.

At the same time, Alliance-wide work should leverage, complement and strengthen individual partner efforts, not replace them.

- ***Heightened role for Board and other key Alliance advocates.*** One of the GAVI Alliance's comparative strengths is the authority and respect of its Board members, both public and private, and their respective organisations. It is recognised that these are GAVI's greatest champions but currently they are not being used to their full potential. Former Board members and other close associates of GAVI are similarly placed.

Messaging

Along with the need to strengthen the coordination of our efforts, new powerful messaging must be developed to promote the efficacy of the Alliance's public-private model. We must collectively and credibly communicate the cost-effectiveness of immunisation, its socioeconomic impact on health and development, and GAVI's catalytic role. A value-added proposition about immunisation's return on investment sets GAVI apart and will appeal to private sector donors as well as to governments.

GAVI is well placed to achieve further success in influencing policy and priorities and attracting donor funds. Different messages, tactics and actors will be needed in different markets but the essential elements are present: a proven track record in achieving results and innovation; commitment by Alliance members; a product line that includes new powerful vaccines essential to tackle the major child-killing diseases of pneumonia and diarrhoea and the first women's cancer vaccine; and, a business approach rooted in ensuring sustainable systems for integrated health service delivery. There is close alignment of GAVI's business with the globally-agreed Millennium Development Goals.

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Messaging that supports GAVI's private fund raising efforts in the United States will follow this framework but also speak to the demonstrated role for business leaders and private citizens to make a difference in the lives of millions.

Branding

A concerted effort over the past two years has resulted in one “brand essence,” most easily identifiable in the common look of the GAVI website, and corporate published materials. Now, with the consolidation of the Alliance into one international foundation, we have the opportunity to further strengthen the GAVI brand. This will not be a departure from the past but will build on the work previously undertaken. Through a common message platform, the consolidation of graphics, web and publications operations and the aligning of the corporate website and the Every Child campaign, we will create a less-splintered and more robust public image. In line with a new messaging framework, GAVI branding will be strongly defined by the countries we serve and unique roles and contributions of individual Alliance members. The visibility of countries and Alliance partners in the new 2008 Progress Report provides a good example of this direction.

Proposed next steps

- 1) ***Finalise the integration of the Secretariat and AVI advocacy and communications work plan.*** The Secretariat is currently working with the AVI PATH consortium to ensure the full integration of a coordinated work plan. This approach will guarantee a stronger management structure and better coordination of activities on the global, regional and country levels. Most importantly, it will better enable us to follow a country-driven approach and leverage voices from implementing countries.
- 2) ***Improve collaboration across the Alliance – “Speaking with one voice.”*** The Secretariat will seek to improve coordination of advocacy and communications efforts among the main institutional partners. This board document has already been shared with Global Advocacy Group members who have provided feedback and input. A meeting of the group is being convened in Washington, DC on 5 June to examine how it should serve to strengthen collaboration and determine what else is needed.

The Secretariat will convene a brief series of meetings with other relevant advocacy and communications specialists among the Alliance membership to collect their views and determine their inclusion in collective efforts.

The Secretariat would also like to hear from Board members about how they think improved ownership and commitment can be achieved by the membership.

- 3) ***Agree with partners on collective activities through 2010.*** Together with Alliance partners, the Secretariat will identify a selection of key opportunities over the coming 18 months for collective advocacy and communications outreach. Examples include:

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- Programmatic highlights such as country roll out of pneumococcal and rotavirus vaccines (such as the introduction of the pneumococcal vaccine in Rwanda in April)
 - Expected donor parliamentary elections
 - Events associated with the High Level Task Force on Innovative Financing and other innovative financing forums
 - Publication of the State of the World's Vaccines and Immunisation report, October 2009
 - World Pneumonia Day, November 2, 2009
 - Partners meeting, 19-20 November 2009
 - GAVI's 10th Anniversary, January 2010, (Davos and The Spanish EU Presidency in 2010)
 - UN MDG '5 years to go' high level summit, September 2010
 - Private philanthropy events in major American cities
- 4) ***Strengthen Alliance messaging:*** The Secretariat will consult with Alliance partners to develop and agree upon a GAVI and immunisation messaging framework, which will be rolled out throughout the Alliance to serve as a common platform for all outreach during 2009-2010.
- 5) ***Utilise Board members as key advocates and communicators:*** In coordination with GAVI's fundraising strategy, the Secretariat will identify a limited number of specific opportunities for individual Board members to contribute directly to specific advocacy and communications efforts (e.g. through participation at a significant event, or authoring a media piece). Emphasis will be placed on utilizing board members from implementing countries to further strengthen the country-based approach of our outreach and identifying comparative advantage of board members contacts and influence in target markets.

The Secretariat will provide media training and will develop additional advocacy and communications tools to ensure individuals are well equipped to advance the GAVI Alliance's efforts within their regular schedules.

Decisions requested of the Board

The Board is requested:

- To commit to strengthening engagement of all Alliance partners in collective communications and advocacy efforts.
- To confirm the scope of the Alliance's advocacy and communications outreach in the three environments of immunisation, health and development.
- To strengthen Board member involvement as key advocates for the GAVI Alliance.