

# High-level joint statement on bringing global immunisation and nutrition efforts together – to leave no child behind

28 October 2021

In the past year, we have witnessed significant loss across the globe due to the COVID-19 pandemic: loss of life, loss of economic stability and loss of essential gains made over the last decade to bring immunisation and good nutrition to the world's most vulnerable people. We have been especially concerned by the number of children left behind and who now face severe inequities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which if left unaddressed will surely impact their future growth and development

Even before the pandemic, one in eight children in Gavi-supported countries did not receive any basic, routine vaccines, yet these “zero dose” children accounted for nearly half of all children dying from vaccine-preventable diseases. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the number of zero dose children in Gavi-supported countries increased by nearly 30%, heightening the risk of child deaths, disease outbreaks and medical impoverishment. In addition, these children, and their communities often suffer from multiple deprivations, and are unable to access healthy diets and essential nutrition interventions.

Globally, child malnutrition persists at an alarming rate, with an estimated 149 million children stunted and 45 million wasted in 2020. Because of the pandemic, an additional increase of 22 million stunted children and 40 million wasted children are estimated between 2020 and 2030, with large-scale health and socio-economic consequences. Furthermore, two out of three children suffering from severe wasting do not receive the lifesaving care they need and are at immediate risk of dying.

A wealth of evidence stresses that immunisation and nutrition interventions complement each other, and thus integrating the two could lead to better health outcomes, maximise efficiency gains, and reach more people.

For this reason, as leaders in immunisation and nutrition, we are coming together today to strengthen our efforts to identify and reach vulnerable communities – and especially “zero dose” children – with basic services by:

**Promoting the integration of critical immunisation and nutrition services** to find more efficient delivery mechanisms by leveraging every contact with the health system to deliver essential services.

**Prioritising this integrated approach for building more responsive primary health care systems and universal health coverage** to the benefit of communities.

**Fostering new and diverse multi-stakeholder partnerships** contributing to improved access to health and nutrition services, to help countries prioritize and deliver this integrated approach.

**We are, therefore, committing today** to work *together* to find innovative ways to advance the integrated delivery of immunisation and nutrition services, with a particular focus on reaching zero-dose children – and are calling on our partners, donors, and other stakeholders to join us in this action.

**Gerda Verburg**, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, and Coordinator of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement

**Anuradha Gupta**, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

***The SUN Movement** brings 64 countries and Indian member states together with more than 3,000 civil society organisations, 16 United Nations agencies and more than 900 small- and medium-sized enterprises to advance achievement of global nutrition goals, and to put national priorities at the heart of global efforts to improve nutrition.*

***Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance**, brings together developing country and donor governments, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank, the vaccine industry, technical agencies, civil society, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and other private sector partners. Since its inception in 2000, it has helped to immunize – over 888 million children – and prevented more than 15 million deaths, helping to halve child mortality in 73 developing countries.*

# Statement of Collaboration

## GAVI-SUN action for joint delivery of immunisation and good nutrition

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement are collaborating to stimulate, among countries and partners, a more holistic and integrated approach to immunisation, nutrition interventions and other essential health services as part of countries' efforts to sustainably reach zero-dose children and the world's most vulnerable communities.

Such an expanded collaboration intends to support the realization of both Gavi's 2021-2025 Strategy, which aspires to 'Leave no-one behind with immunisation', and the SUN Movement 3.0 Strategy (2021-2025), which aspires to create a world without hunger and malnutrition.

This integrated approach to the delivery of immunisation and nutrition services is outlined in the October 2021 joint GAVI-SUN policy brief, *Securing a more equitable start to life - towards an integrated approach to immunisation and nutrition*.

As leaders, in the fields of immunisation and nutrition, Gavi and SUN have identified that they can harness their unique capabilities and networks to support countries to sustainably reach vulnerable communities – and especially “zero dose” children - through:

**Agenda setting:** Working together to identify opportunities and develop complementary advocacy and communications strategies to shape, inform and advance the equity agenda with a focus on those left furthest behind.

**Improving data collection and use:** Supporting national governments to identify missed communities and zero-dose children, especially contributing to triangulation of data on immunisation, nutrition, and other essential services.

**Supporting in-country partners (particularly at the subnational level):** Identify and support priority countries and partners wishing to implement an integrated approach to routine immunisation and nutrition services at national and subnational levels.

This Statement of Collaboration will be complemented by annual work plans of opportunities and actions developed jointly by Gavi and the SUN Movement.