

72nd World Health Assembly
Statement by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance
Agenda Item: 11.2

Public health emergencies: preparedness and response

Thank you Chair.

Strong routine immunisation and PHC prevent outbreaks in the first place and strengthen country capacities - such as surveillance, laboratory capacity, emergency coordination, and health workforce – that enable early detection of, and response to, outbreaks.

Since 2016, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance has invested over USD 1 billion towards prevention, detection and response efforts. However, we remain very concerned about the growing number and risk of disease outbreaks globally due to increasing fragility and conflicts, internal and cross-border mobility, urbanisation, and climate change. Communities with large numbers of under-immunised children due to weak primary health care systems are particularly vulnerable to outbreaks.

The Ebola vaccine, made available through Gavi's Advanced Purchase Commitment, has played a major role saving lives in DRC. However, we remain very concerned at the increasing risk of geographical spread of the outbreak and also the risks to health workers. We commend the bravery and resolve of health workers who continue to serve in the complex and challenging environment due to the security situation and other simultaneous outbreaks.

We are continuing to work closely with the Government of DRC to strengthen health systems while responding to the Ebola outbreak. This includes supporting the country's Mashako Plan which aims to raise routine immunisation coverage by 15 percentage points in 18 months, of which initial results are promising.

We also welcome the call to action for UHC in Emergencies launched by the government of Afghanistan and Switzerland.

Recently, Gavi has supported emergency response efforts in Mozambique, including close to 900,000 doses of oral cholera vaccine taken from the global stockpile that is

fully-funded by Gavi. To better respond to specific country needs, we have also offered greater flexibility and tailored support to other countries facing humanitarian emergencies and fragility - for example in Cox's Bazar of Bangladesh, Yemen and Syria. Gavi also supports yellow fever diagnostic to improve diagnostic capability.

Recent surge in outbreaks is a timely reminder that hard-won gains can easily be lost, even in countries with well-established health systems. Going forward, strong political leadership, financing in building resilient primary health care systems, and reducing gaps in routine immunisation coverage and equity will be key to averting future disease outbreaks.

Thank you.