



# COVAX

## THE SHAREHOLDERS COUNCIL MEETING (“THE COUNCIL”)

1 December 2022

Virtual meeting

### 1. Welcome, Introduction and Headline Updates

- 1.1 Noting that the meeting had been duly convened, the Shareholders Council meeting commenced at 13.08 Geneva time on 1 December 2022. Sarah Goulding, Vice Chair of the Gavi Board, chaired the meeting and was joined by Dr Chrysoula Zacharopoulou, former Co-Chair of the COVAX Shareholders Council and Minister of State for Development, Francophonie and International Partnerships, France.
- 1.2 The meeting did not have quorum. In accordance with the COVAX Shareholders Council Operating Procedures, the meeting could proceed at the option of the Co-Chairs, however no decisions could be made.
- 1.3 Ms Goulding welcomed the Council members and speakers, and reviewed the meeting agenda, which included updates on the latest COVAX developments; a retrospective of the COVAX Self-Financing Participant programme; as well as a discussion of COVAX in 2023 and beyond.
- 1.4 Dr Chrysoula Zacharopoulou, Co-Chair of the COVAX Shareholders Council and Minister of State for Development, Francophonie and International Partnerships, France, reflected on key achievements and lessons learned from the Shareholders Council as it moves toward dissolution on 31 December 2022. She emphasised that multilateral cooperation is the key to a fair, inclusive, equitable and efficient global pandemic response, and that it would be important to draw from the experience in the COVID-19 pandemic moving forward.
- 1.5 Ms Goulding warmly thanked Minister Zacharopoulou and Minister Fernando Ruiz for their leadership as Co-Chairs in 2021 and 2022. She noted the important opportunity that the Shareholders Council had offered for candid exchange and collaboration.

- 1.6 Seth Berkley, CEO, provided an update on the state of the pandemic, as per the pre-read that had been shared prior to the meeting. He noted that this is an interesting juncture in the pandemic as infection rates have started to increase again, with Omicron variants remaining dominant, and rising rates are expected to continue throughout the beginning of 2023. However, he reported that death rates are not expected to increase significantly, and this is attributable to higher population-level protection against severe disease resulting from vaccinations and natural immunity. He highlighted the continued efficacy of vaccines against severe illness and death, noting that Variant Containing Vaccines (VCVs) are also effective, but more needs to be learned about their relative benefits. He expressed appreciation to all Shareholders Council members for their engagement, support, and advocacy for the importance of immunisation, as well as to Minister Zacharopoulou and Minister Ruiz for their leadership.
- 1.7 Siri Bjornstad, Procurement Coordinator, UNICEF Supply Division, reported on supply and delivery, noting that 1.85 billion doses has been shipped to 146 participants. She highlighted that 1.65 billion doses had been shipped to 87 AMC-funded countries and 195 million doses were shipped to 59 Self-Financing Participants (SFPs), of which approximately 1 billion doses were donated doses. She also indicated that approximately 70 million more doses were planned for delivery from November 2022 to January 2023, but that there were still uncertainties and expected changes.
- 1.8 Derrick Sim, acting Managing Director, Office of the COVAX Facility, provided an update on dose donations and SFP 1.0 close-out agreements.

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## **2. COVAX SFP Programme – A retrospective and participant views**

- 2.1 Derrick Sim, acting Managing Director, Office of the COVAX Facility, provided an overview of the highlights, achievements, and key learnings of the SFP programme, as per the pre-read materials.
- 2.2 Dr Randa Hamadeh, Director, Social Health Services & Primary Health Care Department, Lebanon, provided recorded remarks about Lebanon's SFP experience. She indicated that Lebanon's participation in COVAX facilitated the national vaccination process and that it had been beneficial to have the option for purchasing arrangements and to be able to decide which vaccine was preferred. In terms of lessons, she noted: i) the importance of following evidence-based approaches when available; ii) that countries with solid primary health care structures had fared better in the fight against COVID-19; and iii) that interventions would not succeed if stakeholders failed to work together to ensure one solid public health response to emergencies.

*Discussion*

- Several Council members reflected that it was clear that putting multilateralism and equity at the heart of this global endeavour had been the right thing to do.
- Several Council members asked for more information about how SFP reflections and lessons would be captured in the COVAX evaluation that is underway. It was clarified that Gavi is undertaking a series of independent evaluations and the SFP experience will be an essential part of those evaluations.
- Several Council members commented on the overall pandemic response model and whether participation in any new design would be global or limited to AMC economies; and whether there would be a role for SFPs moving forward, with some members signaling that there would be value in maintaining the voice from SFPs. It was clarified that this question is very much under consideration at this point, including through the evaluation process, and members were encouraged to lend their voices to that process. It was noted that there had been clear benefits in terms of global solidarity and changing ways of thinking and engagement that came with the broad participation model of COVAX, but there were also lessons learned for any future design, including around the need for contingent financing and surge capacity.
- Council members also offered additional lessons including:
  - On design, that the optional purchase agreement had been very useful and goal oriented, along with the opt-out provision; and that any future procurement mechanism should include robust governance;
  - The scale of need for delivery funding, which would need to be built into programming in coming years;
  - The importance of ensuring that the needs for equity and access are combined, and can converge with the needs of high income countries;
  - On manufacturing, that it would be important to take stock and make sure this is fit for purpose moving forward;
  - The need to improve transparency and flexibility for mutual planning, along with a suggestion to continue the dose donation forum through 2023 and to hold meetings on a regular basis. On this point, it was clarified that there is work underway to review the dose donation processes moving forward; and
  - On strengthened financial reporting and the frequency of information provided, of which the Secretariat took note of and will follow up.

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**3. COVAX in 2023 and beyond**

- 3.1 Derrick Sim, acting Managing Director, Office of the COVAX Facility, provided an overview of the latest planning on SFP participation, namely that from the beginning of 2023, COVAX will not be accepting new procurement requests from SFPs until further notice, and that SFPs will remain as non-procuring participants, as detailed in the pre-read materials.
- 3.2 Brenda Killen, Director, Governance, summarised the recommendations that would likely be put forward to the Gavi Board in December 2022 related to the COVAX governing bodies. She flagged the proposals to dissolve the Shareholders Council and Consensus Group at the end of 2022, and to modify the Terms of Reference for the COVAX AMC Engagement Group to allow former members of the Shareholders Council to attend as observers.

*Discussion*

- Council members expressed support for the proposed approach, with one member noting there was interest in continuing to contribute where needed, beyond an observer role.

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**4. Summary, Takeaways and Closing Remarks**

- 4.1 Derrick Sim, acting Managing Director, Office of the COVAX Facility, presented the meeting summary and key takeaways.
- 4.2 The Chair thanked all stakeholders for a productive session.

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