

UK hosts Global summit on vaccines

- Prime Minister Boris Johnson today hosted the Global Vaccine Summit
- More than 50 countries and organisations will come together to secure funding for GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance
- The Summit aims to raise at least \$7.4bn (approx. £6bn) to immunise a further 300 million children in world's poorest countries by 2025

Prime Minister Boris Johnson today (Thursday 4 June) opened the UK-hosted Global Vaccine Summit and urged nations to pledge funding for vaccinations to save millions of lives and protect the world from future outbreaks of infectious diseases.

Representatives of over 50 countries, including President Mohammed Farmajo and at least 35 other Heads of State or Government, as well as leaders of private sector organisations and civil society, are coming together at the Summit to raise funds for GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance.

Addressing attendees at the Summit, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

I hope this Summit will be the moment when the world comes together to unite humanity in the fight against disease. Just as the UK is the single biggest donor to the international effort to find a coronavirus vaccine, we will remain the world's leading donor to GAVI, contributing £1.65 billion over the next five years.

The recent Somali Health & Demographic Survey found that only 11% of Somali children aged 12-23 months had been vaccinated against the most common preventable diseases. GAVI spent around \$10-12m in Somalia in each of the last two years, with a focus on strengthening health systems, supporting cold chains and immunising against measles and other disease.

The British Ambassador to Somalia, Ben Fender, said:

I'm delighted that President Farmajo has joined other world leaders including Prime Minister Boris Johnson in contributing to this Summit. The Global Vaccine Summit is held once every five years. In the last 20 years, GAVI has helped vaccinate half the world's children, 760 million in all. Today's Summit will help pay for the next five years of GAVI's work.

In recent years, we have made progress in increasing vaccine coverage across Somalia, but there is further to go. We must work together to protect children across Somalia from deadly but preventable diseases like polio, diphtheria and measles.

The UK is the largest donor to Somalia's health sector. In 2019, our Somali Health & Nutrition (SHINE) programme, helped deliver life-saving vaccines to over 90,000 Somali children, protecting them against five common childhood illnesses. At the moment, we are working hard to ensure that routine immunisation continues across the country, despite COVID-19.

In a recorded video, Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo said:

It is great honour to participate in this virtual summit hosted by the UK government under the leadership of PM Johnson. GAVI is an inspirational partnership between coalition of governments, international agencies to vaccinate against diseases and death, Somalia is proud to be part of this vaccines alliance for healthier, safer and equitable society.

Prevention is always better than cure and vaccinating against preventable diseases and strengthening the health of citizens everywhere including here at home is a basic human rights.

Coronavirus has truly tested the world in every way possible; it has taught us the importance of preparation, collaboration and timely action to protect our citizen's future. I welcome and strongly support GAVI's focus on accelerating a vaccine for COVID-19 and I urge for this to be made available to the most vulnerable.

The UK government is the leading donor to GAVI, and has already pledged an

equivalent funding of £1.65 billion over the next five years to GAVI to help fund immunisation of close to 75 million children in the world's poorest countries.

As the world focuses on tackling coronavirus, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and GAVI have warned that the pandemic is disrupting routine immunisation, affecting approximately 80 million children under the age of 12 months across 68 countries.

In attendance at the summit was also International Development Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan, who said:

The world is quite rightly focusing on responding to the invisible killer that is coronavirus. But we cannot allow this pandemic to disrupt routine immunisation in some of the world's poorest countries and cause other deadly diseases to spread across the globe.

We know vaccines work, which is why at today's summit we need others to step up and pledge funds to GAVI, so it can continue to save the lives of millions of children and protect everyone from infectious diseases.

GAVI, with UK support, is addressing the immediate needs triggered by coronavirus, including providing essential medical supplies and helping to increase testing and surveillance of the disease.

As part of the global effort to find a coronavirus vaccine, the UK is also the single largest donor of any country to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations' (CEPI) urgent appeal.

Notes to editors:

The UK's [Vaccine Taskforce](#) will build on the UK's research and development expertise to support international efforts to find a coronavirus vaccine.

International Development Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan [announced](#) the UK's £1.65bn pledge to Gavi – the equivalent of £300m a year over the next 5 years – on the 29th April.