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**STATEMENT BY GAVI ALLIANCE**

**By Mr David Salinas**

I would like to congratulate the Member States and partners here today for their joint efforts to strengthen immunisation programmes in the Region. Through our collective efforts in working towards achieving the immunisation targets in the Western Pacific Region.

Polio eradication remains a global health priority, including in regions which have been certified polio-free for many years. Gavi is fully committed to the polio end game strategy by supporting the introduction of Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV). I am pleased to report that six of the seven Gavi-eligible countries from this region have applied to Gavi and plan to introduce IPV in 2015. The application from seventh country Papua New Guinea will be considered in early 2015.

After opening the funding window for Japanese encephalitis (JE) vaccine, two countries from the Region applied for Gavi support. We recognise that JE is highly endemic in some countries in the region. We encourage countries in the region who have not yet introduced the vaccine to capitalise on this opportunity.

Gavi has supported an unprecedented ramp-up in vaccine implementation over the last year with 41 new vaccines and campaigns launched. A major milestone was achieved in July this year when the last of the 73 Gavi eligible countries, South Sudan introduced DTP-HepB-Hib pentavalent vaccine into their routine immunisation. Increasing the coverage and equity of the vaccine which protects children against five life-threatening diseases is now critical. This provides a sound basis for prevention and control of Hepatitis B disease.

We are delighted to commend the Region on their achievement in being so close to eliminating measles and the decreasing incidence of measles cases since 2008. Gavi has introduced a catalytic programme for measles-rubella to support countries in their efforts such as Cambodia, Viet Nam targeting an estimated 23 million children, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. Gavi funds were also used to respond to a Measles outbreak in Vietnam and Solomon Islands.

Supporting health system strengthening (HSS) is one of our strategic goals and investments in service delivery, supply chain and fully trained health professionals are critical to overcome barriers to improve immunisation coverage. Gavi has committed over US\$59 million to support HSS in the region.

We look forward to partnering with countries in this Region to champion this effort.

Thank you.