The World Bank is a founding partner and important member of the GAVI Alliance. We therefore welcome the opportunity to comment on this review, recognising that it is an evaluation of the World Bank’s partnership with the GAVI Alliance, rather than a report on the Alliance itself.

We strongly endorse the report’s overall conclusion that the GAVI Alliance has much to gain from deeper World Bank engagement and we look forward to working together to achieve this. The proposed areas for increased engagement – fiscal space analysis to ensure financial sustainability and health systems strengthening – represent key priorities for the GAVI Alliance in the coming years (and are the focus of our 2016-20 strategy) and are areas in which the Bank’s unique capabilities, resources, and networks will play a crucial role.

In this context, we welcome recent signals from World Bank leadership that they wish to strengthen their engagement in the Alliance, and particularly recent collaboration on results-based funding as well as support for immunisation in Pakistan. We look forward to a broader and deeper partnership to help ensure every child in the world’s poorest countries benefits from the power of immunisation.

We would, however, like to clarify a number of important issues and also note that we identified a number of errors of fact and queried a number of findings in the draft report, some of which remained unchanged in the final version.

**Distinction between the GAVI Alliance and GAVI Secretariat**

The report is vague in its distinction between the GAVI Alliance and the GAVI Secretariat. The GAVI Alliance – by its very design – is an alliance between partners, donors, countries and industry, of which the World Bank is a founding partner and Board member. The GAVI Secretariat supports the Alliance but implementation is largely performed by partners and countries. It would be helpful to clarify where the report is referring to the GAVI Secretariat and where it refers to the Alliance, in order to understand its conclusions.
For example, the report states that “GAVI itself does not have a presence at the country level and relies heavily on its partners, WHO and UNICEF, for planning and implementing country activities.” It later suggests this is a reason why the Bank has found it difficult to engage with “GAVI” at country level. By design, the GAVI Secretariat does not have a country presence and this is a core part of the GAVI Alliance model which the World Bank as a founding partner helped to create. However, the GAVI Alliance has a strong presence at country level where it is represented primarily by UNICEF and WHO, both of whom are Alliance partners and many of whose immunisation staff are funded by GAVI. In this example, we are unclear if the report’s finding is that the World Bank will always face challenges engaging with “GAVI” at country level given our Alliance model.

GAVI Alliance Strategy
The Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) report paints a shift in the GAVI Alliance’s strategy from focusing broadly on access to immunisation at its inception towards a focus on accelerating introduction of new vaccines and technologies after 2008. It cites this as one reason why the Bank decided to disengage from the Alliance.

In fact, a major rationale for the creation of the GAVI Alliance was to accelerate introduction of new vaccines and this has always accounted for the majority of GAVI financial support. It was only in 2007, with the first disbursements of health system strengthening grants, that the Alliance began to work more comprehensively on broadening immunisation coverage and access across all GAVI countries.

With the development of the Alliance’s 2016-2020 strategy, in which the World Bank has been an active partner, coverage and equity will become even greater priorities. As the report suggests, this should hopefully further reinforce strategic alignment between the GAVI Alliance and the World Bank.

Causes of World Bank Disengagement from GAVI
The report traces the Bank’s disengagement to 2008, linking it primarily to GAVI’s governance reform and disagreements over whether to prioritise new vaccine introduction or financial sustainability. Many of the tensions described in the report, however, existed long before GAVI’s governance reform. Indeed the greatest tensions were over introduction of pentavalent vaccine, which GAVI has supported since its early years and which Bank staff felt was too expensive to be sustainable. We note that 72 of 73 GAVI-eligible countries have now introduced pentavalent vaccine (with the final country planning to introduce this year) and that there has been a two-thirds reduction in the lowest price available thanks
largely to the Alliance’s market shaping efforts which are central to our strategy for sustainability.

Moreover, the Bank remained actively engaged with the GAVI Alliance until 2010. For example, it chaired the Immunisation Financing and Sustainability Task Team until 2010, chaired the working group that developed GAVI’s eligibility policy in 2010 and chaired the working group on performance-based financing that was presented to the Board in December 2010. From our perspective, the Bank’s greatest disengagement followed its decision not to participate in GAVI’s 2011-15 business plan because the GAVI Board required that all funded partners be held accountable for specific deliverables in return for receiving funding.

While sustainability has always been core to the GAVI model (which includes features such as long-term financial commitments to countries and requiring co-financing from countries based on their ability to pay), it will be an even greater priority during our next strategy period as a number of countries “graduate” from GAVI Alliance support. We look forward to deeper World Bank engagement on this issue, where the Bank’s unique capabilities within the Alliance and strong relationships with Ministries of Finance will be critical.

Looking Forward
Again, we strongly share the IEG’s finding that the World Bank and GAVI share common goals and would mutually benefit from increased engagement. We are committed to strengthening the relationship and feel that we have good momentum with the current leadership team. The ongoing dialogue on the 2016-2020 GAVI Alliance strategy and operating model will facilitate additional definition around the roles and responsibilities of the GAVI Secretariat, the World Bank, and other GAVI Alliance partners at both the country and global levels. We look forward to the Bank’s continued involvement in this process.

As part of these discussions, we particularly hope to secure the Bank’s increased engagement at country level to ensure sustainability of immunisation programs. The Bank’s deep relationship with Ministries of Finance in GAVI countries, combined with its expertise (e.g., in fiscal space analysis), will be crucial to the success of the Alliance as a whole in this area. As noted in the report, this is an “area of Bank comparative advantage that other partners do not systematically cover” – precisely the type of partnership at the core of the GAVI Alliance model. Similarly, collaboration between the Bank and GAVI on health systems strengthening represents a clear opportunity for collaboration. We would also note that both the Bank and the GAVI Alliance have prioritised strengthening data, and that this is another potential opportunity for further joint work.
As the report notes, the World Bank has made critical contributions to the GAVI Alliance in our first 14 years. We look forward to working with colleagues at the Bank to further deepen our engagement going forward. We fundamentally believe that by working more closely together, we can ensure more of the world’s children have access to the power of immunisation.
World Bank Group Management Response

Management broadly supports the findings of the Independent Evaluation Group’s (IEG) Global Program Review of the Bank’s performance as a development partner of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI). The Review is timely, as the GAVI Alliance is finalizing a new strategy for 2016 to 2020 and the next GAVI replenishment is just around the corner in 2015. The Review also has the potential to inform an expanded partnership and renewed engagement between the Bank’s new Global Health Practice and GAVI which is currently underway. In that, the Bank and GAVI agreed to deepen and expand collaboration to integrate vaccine financing and delivery into health systems and to co-finance selected operations in countries, including through Results-Based-Financing (RBF). Further, the international health community in a recent meeting of their leaders, re-committed to the principles of the International Health Partnership (IHP+ for which both the Bank and GAVI are co-signatories), requiring donors to adhere to Paris/Accra principles of aid effectiveness.

Management concurs with IEG in their assessment that GAVI has evolved as a successful, well-funded, and highly effective public-private partnership which has succeeded in accelerating the introduction of new vaccines for poor countries at a large scale, hence saving millions of lives. We particularly welcome IEG’s assessment regarding the constructive role the Bank was able to play in partnering with GAVI to come up with two of the most innovative and promising financing instruments for development: the International Financing Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm) has become an important funding source for GAVI and allows for additional funding flexibility, and the pilot Advanced Market Commitment (AMC) for pneumococcal vaccines, which received just recently a very positive evaluation, has resulted in an over 90 percent unit price reduction for pneumococcal vaccines tailored to the needs of the poorest countries.

As GAVI has grown over the last decade from an informal alliance of partners into a robust Swiss foundation of several hundred staff with more formal governance arrangements and a multi-billion dollar budget, it is clear that the relationship with the Bank also has changed and evolved during that time. Management notes that IEG found that the Bank’s vaccine portfolio, both in terms of operations and specific analytical work on immunization, has been on a downward trend. This, however, might be both a reflection of a natural division of labor as the GAVI Secretariat has become larger and technically highly competent to carry out and commission analytical work themselves, and the result of rational choices of countries to substitute concessional credits with available grant funding for vaccines. But we
agree with IEG that there is a need for the Bank to engage with GAVI along the entire value chain of vaccines, ranging from making the investment case for a vaccine introduction, to assuring cost-effectiveness of vaccine programs and long-term sustainability of investments within a country’s budget and fiscal space. Management also agrees with IEG’s assessment that the Bank has an important role to play in assuring that the vaccine sector is firmly embedded within an equitable and effective health system in low and middle income countries and that such systems effectively contribute to further the Bank’s dual objectives of ending poverty and boosting shared prosperity.

Management would like to re-affirm that the Bank always was, and will remain, in the future a valued and productive partner within the GAVI Alliance. This is reflected not only in the successful collaboration and impressive results featured in the IEG review, but also as regards to the important role the Bank is playing in GAVI governance. The Human Development Network and the Concessional Finance and Global Partnerships Vice Presidency have collaborated very effectively over the years in sharing this responsibility, and such technical, fiduciary and strategic input through our work in Committees and the Board is highly valued by the GAVI Secretariat and the partners of the Alliance. Management concurs with IEG and notes that during the first decade of the existence of the GAVI Alliance many impressive quick wins have been made at an ever increasing scale. As the Alliance partnership matures, the challenges for GAVI will build. The Bank will have to play an important role as a key GAVI partner in assuring GAVI’s relevance in serving the most hard-to-reach populations, both in low- and middle-income countries with modern vaccines. At the same time, GAVI partners, including the Bank, need to focus on the financial and technical sustainability of an ever more expensive and complex immunization sector within countries’ health systems. Management concurs with the IEG Review that this will require innovative financing mechanisms, effective and seamless in-country collaboration within the IHP+ principles of aid harmonization, institutional leadership, and good governance. The Bank is fully prepared to meet this challenge as a member in good standing of the GAVI Alliance and considers the IEG report a useful tool for reflection and discussion to meet this goal.