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Prominent experts to support GAVI alliance

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Nine prominent Indians announced today that they have agreed to support the goal of increasing access to immunisation and reducing child mortality across the country.

They will work with the GAVI Alliance, a public private partnership made up of members including the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations International Children Emergency Funding (UNICEF), the World Bank and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, as members of the
GAVI Advisory Council in India.

Together the nine prominent figures, drawn from Indian politics, public health and media, will provide strategic advice and thought leadership. The inaugural members of the Council are:

Ã¯â??Â· Baijayant Jay Panda, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha
Ã¯â??Â· Nand Kishore Singh, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha
Ã¯â??Â· Harshavardhan Neotia, Chairman, Ambuja Neotia Group
Ã¯â??Â· Dr. Vishwajeet Kumar, CEO, Community Empowerment Lab
Ã¯â??Â· Shabana Azmi, actor, social activist
Ã¯â??Â· Bachi Karkaria, journalist
Ã¯â??Â· Yuvraj Singh, cricketer, child health and cancer activist
Ã¯â??Â· Sangitha Reddy, Executive Director, Apollo Hospitals Group
Ã¯â??Â· Dr C P Bansal, President, South Asia Paediatric Association

"GAVI needs India's partnership and support to work with India to reduce child mortality," said Dr Seth Berkley, CEO of the GAVI Alliance. "These eminent personalities from different fields, will reinforce our efforts in the
policy discourses on child health and advise the GAVI secretariat and partners on the challenges of immunisation and the introduction of new vaccines in India," Dr Berkley added."I am delighted to be launching
this council, and I sincerely welcome and am grateful for the acceptance of its inaugural members."

India currently accounts for nearly 20% of the world's child deaths and there are still nearly seven million unimmunised children across the country, the largest number of any country and one third of all unimmunised
children in the world. The majority of the world's poorest countries are benefitting from vaccines manufactured in India to save lives but paradoxically some of these vaccines are not yet available to all Indian children.

Members of the council have been selected for their expertise and prominence in their respective fields and will comment and advise in a personal capacity. They will also work closely with members of GAVI Alliance to build effective joint strategies to tackle child survival challenges and save more children from vaccine preventable diseases.