



# WSPID Call to Action

Ensuring Fair Prices for All Vaccines for All Countries  
with Limited Resources

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Action!

## Urgent Action Required for Fair Prices for All Vaccines for All Countries with Limited Resources

The World Society for Pediatric Infectious Diseases (WSPID) calls on governments and international organisations around the world to address vaccine price as a matter of urgency, to protect the lives of present and future generations through global, equitable access to affordable vaccines.

The COVID-19 pandemic imposes tremendous challenges for all countries worldwide, and concerns over vaccine access and affordability have peaked. Vaccine price should not be a barrier to vaccine introduction and the sustainability of immunisation programs.

The widespread availability of vaccines has revolutionised public health, leading to substantial reductions in morbidity and mortality worldwide. Yet, the unaffordability of vaccines is a major barrier to improving child health and requires a global solution.

**We call on governments and international organisations to urgently develop and implement a global plan to better address access and affordability challenges for all countries with limited resources.**

For decades, countries with limited resources have struggled to access affordable vaccines, including those critical for infants. This has resulted in preventable deaths and a perpetuation of global health inequalities.

The persistent and alarming gap in vaccine access between affluent and disadvantaged populations, remains a major challenge.

It is estimated that pneumococcal pneumonia is responsible for about 300,000 deaths in children each year. Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) has been shown to reduce pneumonia hospitalisations by more than 50%, yet 46 countries, mostly low and middle-income countries, have not yet introduced this lifesaving vaccine<sup>1</sup>.

Similarly, about 80 countries have not yet introduced rotavirus (RV) vaccine despite more than 128,000 deaths each year<sup>2</sup>. Eighty-six countries have not introduced human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine for adolescents despite more than 300,000 women dying from cervical cancer each year<sup>1</sup>.

**While the recent focus on COVID-19 vaccines has heightened awareness of this issue, it is essential to acknowledge that the inequity in vaccine access due to unaffordable prices is not limited to the current pandemic.**

1. International vaccine access center (IVAC) VIEW-Hub. 2023 Available: <https://view-hub.org/map/?set=current-vaccine-introstatus&category=rv&group=vaccine-introduction>  
2. Troeger C, Khalil IA, Rao PC, et al. Rotavirus vaccination and the global burden of Rotavirus diarrhoea among children younger than 5 years. *JAMA Pediatr* 2018;172:958-65

## Improving Vaccine Affordability

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, plays a critical role in global immunisation efforts. Gavi has been highly successful in providing vaccines primarily for low-income countries.

However, as countries develop, they transition from Gavi support. Subsequent budget constraints due to competing priorities may lead to difficulties in sustaining vaccine procurement and maintaining immunisation coverage, which may lead to further inequity for hard-to-reach populations and be a barrier to the introduction of new vaccines.

Countries may also face challenges in procuring vaccines without Gavi's support. Gavi's negotiated prices, large purchasing power and procurement mechanisms are essential for ensuring affordable vaccines. Countries transitioning from Gavi need to establish alternative strategies for vaccine procurement and negotiate favourable terms independently.

Countries that were never Gavi eligible but classified as middle-income, including Small Island Developing States, face even more challenges. Pharmaceutical companies often set higher prices for such countries, creating affordability issues. For example, the most recent WHO global vaccine market report found that PCV, RV and HPV vaccines have relatively few manufacturers and have the largest price differential across country income groups with some middle-income countries paying more per dose than high income countries<sup>3</sup>. The average HPV and PCV vaccines prices had approximately an 18-fold difference between the highest and lowest price. For countries who procure their own vaccines, the average prices of HPV, RV and PCV vaccines increased between 2019 and 2021 by 63%, 55% and 43%, respectively<sup>3</sup>.

Additionally, the lack of transparency and competition in the vaccine market further limits options for affordable alternatives. Furthermore, health system challenges, including weak infrastructure, insufficient funding, logistical barriers and lack of purchasing power compound the problem and restrict the ability to negotiate affordable vaccine prices.

To address this, PAHO facilitates the pooled procurement of vaccines for countries in the Americas, most of which are upper middle-income self-financing countries. By leveraging the collective purchasing power of member states, PAHO negotiates favourable prices for vaccines, ensuring cost savings and equitable access. However, challenges with vaccine prices still persist.

**Overcoming these challenges requires alternative procurement strategies benefiting all countries with limited resources, and the promotion of regional cooperation to achieve affordable and sustainable vaccine access.**



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WSPID calls for the urgent need of ensuring fair pricing for all vaccines to ensure they will be the “global public goods” that so many world leaders have rightfully claimed they must be.

Addressing the systemic issue of unaffordable vaccine prices requires a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach.

The following actions by governments and international organisations are crucial for achieving fair vaccine prices for all countries with limited public health resources:



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STAKEHOLDER	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS
<b>Pharmaceutical companies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commit to fair, equitable pricing strategies for vaccines, considering the socio-economic context of all countries with limited resources, and publish pricing by income status of countries.</li> <li>• Facilitate technology transfer and knowledge sharing to enable local production and/or fill and finish technology, and reduce dependence on imports.</li> </ul>
<b>Governments and international organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiate affordable pricing structures en bloc with regional states with pharmaceutical companies, promoting transparency and fair competition – and commit to publishing pricing by income status.</li> <li>• Explore alternative procurement strategies and promote regional co-operation, and support efforts like the Pan American Health Organization’s Revolving Fund to Access Vaccines and UNICEF’s Pacific Vaccine Independence Initiative.</li> <li>• Support technology transfer and capacity building initiatives to enhance local vaccine production such as the WHO-supported mRNA technology hub in South Africa.</li> </ul>
<b>Research and development funders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase investments in research and development of vaccines, specifically targeting diseases prevalent in countries with limited resources.</li> <li>• Encourage partnerships between academic institutions, pharmaceutical companies, and international organisations to foster vaccine research, innovation and improve affordability.</li> </ul>
<b>Global health initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen international collaborations to address vaccine inequity and include all countries with limited public health funds irrespective of World Bank income classifications.</li> <li>• Advocate for policies and mechanisms that promote equitable vaccine access.</li> </ul>



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## About WSPID

**The World Society for Pediatric Infectious Diseases (WSPID) is a non-profit organization and a confederation of national and international Pediatric Infectious Diseases (PID) societies.**

The main objectives of WSPID are to create a global network of PID societies for exchange of information and knowledge between the societies. The WSPID particularly aspires to promote the growth of PID societies in lower income countries and to promote the study and teaching of infectious diseases in those countries.

As a main way to reach its goals, the WSPID organizes international scientific PID congresses in regions that can assemble participants from less economically developed countries.

<https://wspid.org/about-wspid/>