United Nations Children’s Fund  
Executive Board  
First regular session 2020  
11–13 February 2020  
Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

Extension of the Vaccine Independence Initiative and its revolving fund

Summary

The Executive Director recommends that the Executive Board approve a five-year extension of the Vaccine Independence Initiative for the period 2021 to 2025, in accordance with the terms of the original programme document approved by the Executive Board in 1991 (E/ICEF/1991/P/L.41) and as amended following Executive Board approval in 2015 (decision 2015/5, which endorsed document E/ICEF/2015/P/L.5).

Elements of a decision for consideration by the Executive Board are provided in paragraph 8 of this document.

* E/ICEF/2020/1.

Note: The present document was processed in its entirety by UNICEF.
1. The Vaccine Independence Initiative (VII) was originally established by UNICEF in 1991 (E/ICEF/1991/P/L.41) for the period 1991 to 1995. The initiative had three components: (a) a revolving fund capitalized at up to $10 million; (b) a vaccine procurement mechanism; and (c) a mechanism to utilize local currencies to replenish the fund. Countries use the VII mechanism to prevent their cash flow fluctuations from causing vaccine stock-outs and supply interruptions. Since its inception, more than 34 countries have used the VII to accelerate the availability of essential supplies.

2. The Executive Board has extended the VII five times since its establishment in 1991: from 1996 to 2000 (pursuant to decision 1996/17); from 2001 to 2005 (decision 2000/14); from 2005 to 2010 (decision 2005/12); from 2011 to 2015 (decision 2010/15); and from 2015 to 2020 (decision 2015/5).

3. In view of the increasing value of pre-financing requests that UNICEF has received from countries, including across different commodity types, through its 2015 approval, the Executive Board also (a) amended the authorized capitalization of the revolving fund to $100 million, subject to availability of specific-purpose contributions; (b) approved the pre-financing through VII of non-vaccine commodities (including health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, and education supplies), and (c) approved utilizing VII to support contracting arrangements that result in a secure supply or reduced prices of vaccines and other commodities.

4. Since 2015, VII has accelerated the purchase of supplies worth more than $209 million by an average of four to six months. The VII throughput has dramatically increased from an annual average of $6 million over the period 2010 to 2014 to more than $66 million in 2018. Since 2015, the availability of 565 million doses of vaccines, including polio vaccine, approximately 100,000 cartons of ready-to-use therapeutic foods, and almost 400,000 packs of antiretroviral medicines, among other essential supplies, has been accelerated to support country programmes. These pre-financing interventions have avoided or addressed acute commodity stock-outs in countries, which reduce children’s access to essential supplies.

5. The increase in throughput has been supported by an almost quadrupling of the VII capital base from $8.9 million in February 2015 to $35 million as of November 2019, following additional financial support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and the United States Fund for UNICEF. This capital base growth builds on pre-2015 contributions from the Australian Agency for International Development, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, New Zealand, Norway, the United States Agency for International Development and other donors.

6. The VII plays an increasingly important role in helping countries to achieve their routine immunization goals and to sustain access to essential supplies. This is critical as countries transition from a reliance on donor funds to their own domestic resources to finance the purchase of these essential supplies.

7. The Executive Director recommends that the Executive Board approve a five-year extension of the Vaccine Independence Initiative for the period 2021 to 2025, in accordance with the terms of the original programme document approved by the Executive Board in 1991 (E/ICEF/1991/P/L.41) and as amended following Executive Board approval in 2015 (decision 2015/5, which endorsed document E/ICEF/2015/P/L.5).

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1 Through 30 September 2019.
Draft decision

8. UNICEF recommends that the Executive Board adopt the following draft decision:

_The Executive Board_

_Approves_ a five-year extension of the Vaccine Independence Initiative for the period 2021 to 2025, in accordance with the terms of the original document approved by the Executive Board in 1991 (**E/ICEF/1991/P/L.41**), and as amended following Executive Board approval in 2015 (decision 2015/5, which endorsed document **E/ICEF/2015/P/L.5**).