Mr. Dagfinn Hoybraten, Chairman of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) Board;

Dr. Seth Berkley, CEO of GAVI;

Dr. Richard Sezibera, Secretary General of East African Community;

Hon Dr Hussein Mwinyi, Minister for Health and Social Welfare;

Hon. Juma Duni Haji, Minister of Health, Zanzibar;

Hon. William Mgimwa, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs;

H.E. Alfonso Lenhart, US Ambassador to Tanzania;

H.E. Graca Machel, Former First Lady of South Africa;

H.E. Dr. Chrine Kaseba Sata, First Lady of Zambia;

Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Representatives of UNECEF, WHO and All Partners in the Health Sectors;

Distinguished participants;

Invited Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to Tanzania and to Dar-es- Salaam in particular, for the 5th Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation Partners Forum. I sincerely thank all of you for being here, particularly those who have travelled many miles to come and participate at this Forum. It speaks volumes about the importance that you all attach to humanity.

Indeed I thank the Chairman of GAVI Board and the entire management team of GAVI Secretariat for choosing Tanzania to play host to this important Forum. You have accorded our country an honor for which we will always be grateful and cherish. Please feel at home away from home and find time after the meeting to visit some of our beautiful tourist sites. I am sure they will fascinate and entice you to come back for long holiday in the near future.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As you are all aware, the global progress to achieve health related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the deadline of 2015 is uneven. Some regions are showing great progress and are on course while others are lagging behind. Africa, especially countries South of the Sahara, are not on track to meeting the goals on reducing child and maternal mortality, improving maternal and child health and combating infectious diseases. This is so because basic health infrastructure, human resources, equipment and supplies are not adequate to provide essential maternal, child
and reproductive health services and control and treat infectious diseases. As a result of this situation, the continent
accounts for half of all maternal deaths and half of the deaths of children under five. This is not acceptable, it should
not be left to continue.

Tanzania, my dear country, in the same boat, facing similar challenges experienced by other developing countries.
The need for action was appreciated as early as at independence. Successive governments have put in place and
implemented various health programmes to address those challenges. Our commitment and dedication is firmly
reflected in all our major development frameworks and health blueprints including the Development Vision 2025, the
National Strategy for Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction, New Health Policy, Primary Health Services
Development Programme (2007), the Health Sector Strategic Plan III (2009-2015) and the National Roadmap for
Accelerating Reduction of Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (2008-2015). But it has never been easy as the
challenges are numerous.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Since 2005 the government has scaled up investment in public health and two years later we started implementing
the Primary Health Services Development Programme (MMAM). The main thrust of this ten-year Programme is to
increase access to primary health care services through improving coverage of health facilities and strengthening
health systems. Immunization has been the mainstay of our efforts. All the public and private health facilities across
the country provide it free of charge to our people. Our slogan remains “Chanjo ni Haki ya Kila Mtoto” literally
meaning immunization is a right for every child.

We have seen the benefits of our efforts as equity and accessibility in the provision of immunization services has
been achieved. The routine immunization coverage is above 80 percent in most of the districts for five consecutive
years since 2007 and above 90 percent at national level for three consecutive years. From where we stand, one can
see the light at the end of the tunnel. I believe that with the continued support of our partners, we will achieve full
coverage in few years to come. The promise is there, the logic is overwhelming, and the need is great.

Mr. Chairman;

The landmark success achieved in immunization has improved child health and reduced infant mortality in Tanzania.
For example, the last case of wild polio virus was diagnosed in 1996 and since 2012 we have eliminated neonatal
tetanus. Furthermore we have achieved the pre-elimination goals of measles. In the quest to achieving further
progress, new vaccines including Hepatitis B and Haemophilias Influenza type B was introduced in 2002 and 2009
respectively. We commend the partnership with GAVI, the UN and many others for these success stories.

The interventions have also enabled Tanzania to make considerable progress in reduction of under-five and infant
mortality over the past decade. The infant mortality was reduced from 99 per 1000live births in 1999 to 51 per
1000live births in 2010. In the same period, the under five mortality was reduced from 147 to 81. This is equal to 49
percent reduction in infant mortality and 45 percent reduction in under-five mortality rate. Definitely there is room to do
much more as the number of deaths is still high.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The progress we have all achieved is heart-warming and very encouraging indeed. We therefore need to consolidate
the gains by sustaining the immunisation programmes and other health interventions. In this regard we have to
strengthen our fight against malaria, pneumonia and diarrhoea-the three main causes of death in children. In the case
of malaria, I am happy that significant progress has been achieved and malaria prevalence has declined from 18
percentin 2007 to 10 percentin 2011. But, the other two diseases still pose a formidable challenge.

We need to scale up our intervention so as to enhance prevention and management of pneumonia and diarrhoea. It
is encouraging to note that we will soon introduce two new vaccines namely Pneumococcal and Rota virus vaccines.
The preparations for nation-wide launch in early next year have been completed. These vaccines protect children
against pneumonia and the leading cause of severe diarrhoea.I believe they will provide yet another opportunity to
score further points in the reduction of under-five mortality. Next year, we look forward to introducing the Human
Papilloma Virus (HPV) Vaccine that prevents cervical cancer and second dose of the measles vaccines.I commend
the innovation of GAVI that has empowered us to introduce new vaccines that would otherwise not been affordable.
Mr. Chairman;

More success would have been achieved in Tanzania if the overall health infrastructure, human resource and delivery system are strong and efficient. At the moment we still have inadequate skilled human resource, underdeveloped health infrastructure as well as inadequate equipment and supplies to provide quality health services to women and children. We are addressing some of the major challenges. The enrolment in health training has increased seven fold over the past five years from 1,013 in 2007 to over 7,000 in 2012. Furthermore over 6,000 health workers of different cadres were recruited and deployed in the health sector in 2011. The health sector budget was also increased from 271 billion Shillings in 2005 to 1.5 trillion Shillings in 2011/12. And many more hospitals, health centres and dispensaries were established in different parts of the country and their services improved.

The needs are many; and we cannot overcome them in a short time. Furthermore budgetary constraints are limiting our ability to respond in timely manner. In this regard we still have a long journey to travel in order to reach our target. But I am sure we can reach there as we are doing for immunization coverage. I look forward for the usual assistance and support from our friends to achieve our noble objectives. Together, we can overcome.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Before I conclude, allow me to express my deep appreciation for the commitment of development partners who are behind the success of our immunization programme and overall health improvement in Tanzania. These include the UK Government, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Canada to mention but a few. I also thank WHO, UNICEF and the United States of America for their direct support to immunization interventions in Tanzania. We are equally grateful to partners of the health basket fund which has significantly contributed to support the immunization programme in Tanzania. These are the governments of Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, Ireland and the UNFPA. Let me, also acknowledge the Government of Italy for supporting GAVI.

I would also like to recognize and appreciate the Red Cross, Faith Based Organizations and Private Hospitals for devoting their time and resources to support efforts aimed at improving accessibility to basic health services like immunization to all. I cannot find better words to say how grateful we are to their support for immunization services and in many other areas.

Mr. Chairman; Invited Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen;

It would be remiss of me if I concluded my speech without expressing my sincere gratitude to you, Mr. Chairman, for your commitment, passion and exemplary leadership in taking the health agenda forward especially for lower and middle income countries. In the same vein, I express heartfelt gratitude to all our partners and the international community at large for extending the technical and financial support.

In conclusion, I want to assure you that Tanzania remains committed to reduction of maternal, newborn and child mortality. We understand that immunization is a key intervention towards realization of MDG 4, 5 and 6. We look forward to a continued collaboration as we strive to saving children’s lives and protecting our people’s health by increasing access to immunization.

After these many words, I now declare the 5th GAVI Partners Forum meeting officially opened.

Thank you for your kind attention.