Throughout 2014, we applied various mechanisms to engage stakeholders, ranging from one-on-one discussions and expert input forums to informal discussions during conferences and meetings.

GRI G4-25
The engagement helped to inform our strategy and actions on a number of issues as well as those of others within the broader health community. The following examples illustrate the types of engagements in which we participate.

ACCESS TO HEALTH

In 2013, we continued our engagement with key external stakeholders, including international funding organizations (IFOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and government aid agencies, which in many cases play an active role in expanding access to medicines for patients through direct operational activities or through advocacy on issues related to access. Our objective is to enhance our engagement in a way that is consistent with our company’s sustainable access objectives. This approach provides opportunity to gain a better understanding of our stakeholders, their objectives and their needs, and can work toward developing mutually beneficial solutions.

Throughout 2014, we continued our involvement in the Gates/CEO Global Health Roundtable, a joint initiative by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the biopharmaceutical industry that seeks new ways to collaborate to improve global health, specifically by combating infectious diseases in developing countries. Since the inception of the Roundtable in 2009, our company has been an active participant in a number of Roundtable projects, including efforts to help reduce the global burden of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) in line with the World Health Organization’s 2020 goals to discover and develop new combination drugs for tuberculosis, and to strengthen immunization systems and vaccine delivery, as well as other initiatives to improve access to medicines and vaccines. In April 2014, our chief executive officer, Kenneth C. Frazier, assumed the position of co-chair, along with Bill Gates, of the Gates/CEO Roundtable.

MSD for Mothers

Throughout 2014, MSD for Mothers (known as Merck for Mothers in the U.S. and Canada) collaborated with a broad range of stakeholders from government, multilateral organizations and the business community to advance our joint goal of improving maternal health worldwide.

- In the U.S. and India, we built on our work with leading professional organizations—namely the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India (FOGSI)—by developing, implementing and advocating for standardized measures to improve the quality of care women receive at health facilities.
We joined with the World Bank to elevate the important role of local private providers in reducing maternal mortality, hosting a high-level side event during the 2014 U.N. General Assembly. Leaders from the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.N. and our partners at Population Services International also participated, and we were joined by more than 400 in-person and online stakeholders from government, foundations, companies, media, NGOs and U.N. agencies. The event was an important milestone in MSD for Mothers’ broader advocacy efforts to raise awareness that private doctors, midwives and drug shops are delivering a substantial proportion of maternal healthcare throughout the world.

We expanded our engagement with the World Health Organization (WHO) to advance heat stable carbetocin to treat postpartum hemorrhage, the leading cause of maternal death. WHO is initiating clinical trials of the drug in 2015 in 11 countries, involving nearly 30,000 women.

We convened the MSD for Mothers Advisory Board for a meeting in Uganda, where we engaged this prominent group of maternal health leaders for site visits to our Ugandan project and technical meetings about MSD for Mothers’ priorities and activities moving forward.

OUR VACCINES

Our company collaborates with a broad set of global stakeholders to improve access to vaccines. We help inform the vaccine policy environment through stakeholder engagement with important international organizations such as the WHO, the GAVI Alliance Board and UNICEF. Additionally, we engage stakeholders from regional and national organizations, contributing to the development and implementation of regional and national vaccination programs.

- Our partnership with GAVI and other Alliance partners is helping to ensure that infants and girls in the poorest countries have access to rotavirus and Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines.
- Through active engagement of the GAVI Alliance, we helped to foster an environment that led to mobilization of funding and partner technical support for the introduction of new vaccines in the worlds’ poorest countries. Focusing on the anticipated need for our HPV and rotavirus vaccines, GARDASIL® [Human Papillomavirus Quadrivalent (Types 6, 11, 16, and 18) Vaccine, Recombinant] and ROTATEQ® (rotavirus vaccine), we collaborated with GAVI and other members of the Alliance, including UNICEF, to understand estimated country demand for the vaccines over time, and to determine the lowest possible access prices that could be sustainably offered to GAVI and UNICEF for the vaccine volumes to be delivered to these poorest countries. To date, 16 of the 23 countries approved by GAVI for HPV have selected GARDASIL and five GAVI-eligible countries are using ROTATEQ. This resulted in greater than 10 million doses of GARDASIL and ROTATEQ being shipped to GAVI-eligible countries through 2014.
- Given the uncontrolled spread and devastating impact of the current Ebola epidemic, together with Newlink Genetics and a global network of partners we are collaborating in unprecedented ways with the singular focus of speeding the research, development, manufacturing, regulatory approval and deployment of a well-tolerated and effective Ebola vaccine. In less than four months, the development program advanced from first in humans to initiation of Phase II/III trials. The scope of the collaboration extends well beyond our company, Newlink Genetics to many international partners leading clinical evaluation in the U.S., Canada, Europe and Africa (e.g., government agencies in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, the WHO, NIH, Public Health Agency of Canada, local academic and research centers), government agencies and funders providing critical programmatic and funding support (e.g., U.S. Department of Defense, BARDA, CDC, BMGF, the European Commission), and international organizations preparing for procurement and distribution (e.g., WHO, GAVI, UNICEF) should the vaccine candidate be demonstrated to be efficacious and well-tolerated and approved by regulatory authorities. Together with Newlink, we continue to engage stakeholders through this strong alliance network to advance the vaccine development program but also to establish a precedent for industry and the global health community’s response to public health emergencies and foster a new, inclusive model for communications and collaboration.

WOMEN’S HEALTH

We engage with key global donors and funding organizations, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), John Snow, Inc. (JSI), the Department for International Development (DFID), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI), the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) through a joint oversight board with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation,
which serves to ensure the success of the IMPLANON® Access Program.

The board meets formally three times per year to discuss issues related to product production and capacity-building activities. During 2014, we engaged closely with stakeholders and customers at the global and national levels in emerging markets to develop effective strategies to ensure a seamless transition from IMPLANON® (etonogestrel implant), our long-acting reversible contraceptive implant, to our next-generation implant, IMPLANON NXT® (etonogestrel implant). Input from and coordination with stakeholders including ministries of health, USAID, UNFPA, JSI, CHAI and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation were critical to ensure plans were and continue to be in place to train local healthcare professionals, avoid stockouts at local delivery points and support overall coordinated supply planning. In addition, these stakeholders shared with us that the cost of our placebo trainers used in the clinical training for IMPLANON NXT was becoming a barrier to the introduction of the product. This led to our decision in early 2015 to make the placebo trainers available at no cost in donor-funded countries.

As a supporter of Family Planning 2020 (FP2020), representatives from our company are active members in two of the four FP2020 working groups:

- The Country Engagement Working Group, which provides support to countries as they develop, implement and monitor progress against their transformational family-planning plans
- The Market Dynamics Working Group, which is addressing tensions and information gaps in the market that can unlock new and important opportunities to ensure that access to contraceptive supplies and services is expanded to new users

Representatives from our Women’s Health team participate in the Bellagio Group, a group of international experts on family planning and reproductive health that strives to find innovative solutions that expand contraceptive choice and accelerate universal access to reproductive health services by increasing the availability of long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs).

The group convened in October 2014 in Mexico City to discuss ongoing efforts to expand access.

In January 2014, during the Seventh Asia Pacific Conference on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights in Manila, our company held a forum with key public, private and civil society partners to discuss ways to work together to accelerate the rollout of contraceptive supplies and methods following the passage of the Philippines’ historic reproductive health law.

INFECTIONIOUS DISEASE—HIV AND VIRAL HEPATITIS

We engage in multiple ways with community representatives and other external stakeholders working in infectious disease, with an emphasis on HIV and viral hepatitis, to address issues related to care and treatment both in the developed and the developing world. We meet regularly with national, regional and global community advisory boards to discuss issues of treatment and treatment access with community representatives. Over the past year, we have met with the European AIDS Treatment Group’s European Community Advisory Board to discuss both HIV and HIV-HCV coinfection, with the European Liver Patients Association community advisory board, with HIV and HCV treatment advocates in the United States through multiple venues, with the Eastern European and Central Asian Community Advisory Board, and with the World Community Advisory Board meeting on the hepatitis C virus (HCV), and the World Hepatitis Alliance Advisory Committee, among others.

We are also actively engaged in multi-stakeholder–based organizations to address treatment issues in HIV and viral hepatitis. These engagements include engagement with international and national coalitions such as the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable, National Hepatitis Corrections Network, the Viral Hepatitis Action Coalition, a public-private partnership developed by the CDC Foundation to help make meaningful advances in the prevention, screening and treatment of viral hepatitis, and with the International AIDS Society’s (IAS) Industry Liaison Forum, a mechanism to inform and support collaboration and partnership between the pharmaceutical industry and the IAS.

Our company is also a long-standing member of the Private Sector Delegation to the Global Fund for HIV, TB and Malaria, the largest multilateral funder of HIV, TB and malaria prevention, care and treatment in the developing world. The Private Sector Delegation represents the private sector in the multi-stakeholder governance structure of the Global Fund, alongside donor and implementer government, civil society, community and private foundation delegations.

1 An outcome of the London Summit was the formation of FP2020 to track progress and report on the financial and policy commitments made at the Summit, identify obstacles and barriers to their achievement and recommend solutions.