



## **Preparing for Pandemics: Lessons Learned for More Effective Responses**

### **I. Dangerously unprepared**

The current Ebola outbreak represents an unprecedented crisis that has underlined the need to enhance WHO's leadership, accelerate preparedness in countries and increase coordination among partners to better detect, prevent and manage any future crises. The difficulties in eradicating polio, in particular the lack of security and healthcare infrastructure in remote areas as well as corruption and vaccination reluctance has highlighted that the global community has to take a multidisciplinary approach to overcome barriers when fighting these diseases. As Bill Gates stressed at a recent meeting of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization in Berlin (on 27 January), and as Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank, recently pointed out, the world is dangerously unprepared for future pandemics, and we have to plan to deal with them as we would plan to prepare ourselves for war.

It is difficult to anticipate the outbreak of such pandemics, but it is possible to develop plans and contingencies to deal with the unexpected. This Post Ebola reflection process needs to consider the wider UN context and the roles of various organizations involved. This requires an international, joined-up and constructive strategy among all relevant stakeholders.

### **II. High-level meeting in Geneva**

Therefore, the International Peace Institute (IPI) calls for an international conference to immediately respond to this call for action, and mobilize relevant experts from diverse backgrounds (i.e. UN Member States, multi-lateral institutions, corporations, philanthropists, historians, sociologists, anthropologists, public health specialists, medical doctors, pharmaceutical specialist, civil society, etc.) to examine lessons learned from dealing with pandemics, and discuss policy recommendations for a more robust response to future pandemics. The aim is to proactively provide and implement solutions as well as encourage adaptive leadership to be better prepared and to reduce the potential harm caused by future pandemics.

The conference will address the complexity of the topic by finding actionable solutions and developing policy recommendations for the thematic clusters of **(i) Enhancing Preparedness and Response** as well as **(ii) Building Resilient Health Systems**. The conference is designed to follow a chronological order leading panelists and participants from lessons learned from the

past to developing actionable solutions and implementing policy recommendations for the future:

#### I. Challenges of the Past, Present and Future

How did pandemics (like the Spanish flu and H1N1) affect global health in the past? What are key triggers and catalysts of pandemics? How has technology and globalization affected the outbreak and spread of pandemics and what are scenarios for the future?

#### II. Lessons learned from responding to Ebola and Polio

What are the lessons learned fighting Ebola and Polio. How can the international community better cope with these challenges? What are best practices in management and coordination of multiple stakeholders when it comes to fighting pandemics? How can we prevent crises like these? How can we improve preparedness and build more resilient coping mechanisms, in particular resilient health care early warning mechanisms to facilitate early action? How can we improve communication and collaboration within and amongst relevant stakeholders?

#### III. Actionable Solutions for more effective preparedness

Where are legal, institutional and managerial gaps, pressure points and bottle necks that have led to slow and inadequate responses in the past? Which new policies could be tailored to overcome these issues and enhance operational responses? Which institutional capacities are required or need to be reformed? Which financial mechanisms need to be put in place? How and where should policies be implemented?

#### IV. Implementing Policy Recommendations

Which of the policy recommendations should be prioritized? Who are the actors that should have the responsibilities to pursue the policy development and follow up on international implementation? This session will endeavor to provide guidance on how the recommendations identified at the meeting can be implemented.

#### III. IPI's Impact and Value Add

As an independent international think- and do-tank, IPI is particularly experienced in convening key decision makers from the public sector, international organizations and the private sector. In particular, IPI will draw on its existing network of contact and **long-standing partnership** with **key organizations** involved in the issue of peace and health as well as humanitarian issues. These include the World Health Organization (WHO), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), GAVI, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF).