

### **Learning from COVID-19 for Future Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response**

We are witnessing a fundamental shift in global health priorities and approaches. COVID-19 has drastically shown the deadly and costly impact of pandemics and put a spotlight on the extreme inequalities in access to tests, treatments, and vaccines across the globe. We now need to gather the lessons learnt to be better prepared politically, technically, and financially to address the existential threat posed by future potential pandemics.

The outcomes of the UN High-Level Meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response (Pandemic PPR) in September 2023 as well as key deliberations of the G7 and G20 will be a leading guide on the next steps to advance action. The negotiation for a pandemic accord – focused on equity and access – as well as the revisions of the International Health Regulations will be critical steps in this process. Significant investment and new types of financing are required.

To combat future existential risks, the Pandemic PPR agenda must be taken beyond the health sector and make resilience a priority at the government and societal level, with broad stakeholder involvement and a focus on communities. Financing must be secure, the ownership of the Pandemic PPR agenda needs to be truly inclusive, and accountability needs to be assured.

### **Recommitting to Universal Health Coverage**

The landscape of global health has witnessed notable setbacks against years of global progress.

This has largely been attributed to a ‘perfect storm’ of compounding and often intersecting global challenges: the growing numbers and length of conflicts, severity and far-reaching impacts of climate change, and the current and growing risks of pandemics. Health systems all around the world have been subject to enormous strain and the world is facing a health workforce crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic further disrupted essential services in most countries.

To best integrate social, economic, and health outcomes, World Health Organization’s recommendation is to reorient health systems to Primary Health Care (PHC). Most of essential Universal Health Coverage (UHC) interventions can be delivered through PHC and 75% of projected health gains from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) could be achieved through PHC that ensures quality and is accessible and affordable. Digital solutions can contribute significantly to this agenda. At community level, the outreach to other sectors can support a focus on addressing inequities in health and the outreach to the most vulnerable populations.

The World Health Summit will build on the conclusions of the UN High-Level Meeting on UHC and explore how to achieve new political commitment and sustainable investment in UHC, especially at the community level.

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## Sustainable Health for People and Planet

The devastating consequences of climate change, ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss, and pollution have never been more severe for health than today. Heat, epidemics, food insecurity, water scarcity, natural disasters that are increasing in intensity, frequency, and duration are major challenges that threaten health and well-being at a global scale, while health systems around the world remain unprepared. To move forward, different UN agencies and cross-sectoral stakeholders have to jointly address ongoing and emerging cross-cutting issues, taking into account the interactions between climate change, biodiversity loss, and health at all stages of the negotiation process.

Despite its potential, a health-focused framing in current climate discussions is not yet sufficiently applied. For the first time a health day at the COP28 will pave the way to focus on the health-climate interface and a set of solutions that need to be addressed, which will reshape the governance and the economics of global climate and health policy while putting a focus on an equity-based approach. This means pro-actively including Planetary Health and One Health approaches in international collaborative mitigation and adaptation strategies and creating a common narrative and vision. Next steps will have to include the construction of climate-resilient and sustainable low carbon health systems that consider the health sector as a guide in shaping an effective response to environmental health challenges.

## G7/G20 Measures to Enhance Global Health Equity and Security

A high degree of cooperation and a joint commitment of governments within the framework of international forums such as the G7/G20 is required to tackle the strongly intertwined social, economic, and environmental issues which contribute to global health. It is essential to align the commitments of these critical political actors with those of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Paris Agreement. Health has become a regular part of the G7/G20 discussions and recommendations.

Both G7 and G20 have addressed the challenges emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, have institutionalized cooperation between health and financial sectors, and initiated the new Pandemic Fund. Recently they have begun to increase their outreach to Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) to ensure the voices of particularly affected countries and regions are included. Equity must be a central pillar of the discussions as countries are unequally affected by crises, with the most vulnerable countries, regions, and groups hit hardest.

The increasing health activities of the G7 and G20 merit a reflection on their most recent actions and recommendations, especially in view of the significant investment requirements in social development, Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response (Pandemic PPR).

## **Harnessing the Power of Digital Technologies for Global Health**

The digital transformation is reshaping health and health care. Digital technologies already play a significant role in supporting individuals, health professionals, and health systems in a wide variety of ways. Examples are raising health literacy to empower people and communities with the information they need to act on their health; developing technology solutions to enable care teams to deliver more connected care; exploring the use of artificial intelligence to assist in diagnostics, medical research and supporting preventive medical solutions. The potential to harness the power of data and digital technologies to improve global health outcomes is only at the beginning.

Yet, the world continues to face a significant digital divide and many of the digital tools for health are not accessible to vulnerable populations. Dis- and misinformation continue to be a significant challenge – as experienced during the pandemic; the impact of algorithms and the protection of health data are an important human rights challenge. The speed with which new technologies are available raises urgent questions of governance and regulation at the national and international level and about the forms of cooperation between private digital platforms and public actors.

## **World Health Organization's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

At this year's World Health Summit we will have the opportunity to take a journey through time in the world of the World Health Organization (WHO) together. We will have a closer look into the factors behind the success stories and the critical junctions of WHO in the past, while exploring the current and future challenges as well as expectations, and will imagine a future, in which people can live healthy, productive lives, regardless of who they are or where they live.

In the 75-year history of the WHO, the Organization has made important progress in improving health for all worldwide. Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go before the health-related goals of the 2030 Agenda are achieved. On this challenging journey in times of multiple crises and geopolitical divides, WHO has developed new partnerships and cooperation with a wide range of sectors.

Collaboration is at the heart of engagement of the WHO. Partnerships with member states, international and regional organizations, parliamentarians as well as non-state actors are essential for WHO to effectively deliver on the WHO's Triple Billion Targets. Initiated by Ghana, Norway and Germany in 2019, the SDG3 Global Action Plan is a platform for improving collaboration among the biggest players in global health.

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## Innovations to Accelerate the Fight Against Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is once again the world's leading infectious disease killer, and 2023 is a critical year in the fight to end this preventable and curable disease. Following the second United Nations High-Level Meeting (HLM) on TB in September 2023, the global TB community will look ahead to its next steps in the journey to ending TB. The way forward in actioning and responding to the political commitments at the HLM will require multi-sectoral dialogue and collaboration.

Disruptions to health systems and diversion of resources caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have also worsened the outlook, resulting in an increase in TB deaths and disease for the first time in a decade. Furthermore, growing drug resistance continues to compound the challenge of TB.

## Global Financing Facility (GFF) Pledging Event

Overlapping global crises and stalled progress in the delivery of essential health services are jeopardizing the lives, rights and future opportunities of women, children, and youth, particularly in lower-income countries.

This high-level pledging moment for the Global Financing Facility (GFF) will showcase how countries, the GFF, and partners are working together to overcome barriers and ensure better health and opportunities for women, children and adolescents. Further, the event will discuss how new partnerships can increase progress on sexual and reproductive health and rights and help address the root causes of inequality.

A fully funded GFF will secure healthier, brighter futures for more than 250 million women, children, and youth in the world's poorest countries. The event will include announcements of new commitments to the GFF and marks a major milestone in the GFF's #DeliverTheFuture campaign co-hosted by the governments of Côte d'Ivoire, Germany, and the Netherlands in partnership with the World Bank.