

An open letter to leaders as negotiations get underway on the Political Declaration for the UN High-Level Meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response.

Enough. It Is Time to Get Deadly Serious.

The world is failing to identify, prevent and stop outbreaks and tackle pandemic threats

To all Heads of State and Government, Ministers of State, Finance and Health, Heads of international organizations, and agencies who have the power to prevent and contain disease outbreaks:

In Geneva and in New York, it's time to make decisions that will prevent and stop infectious disease outbreaks from killing people, draining economies and further fraying societal trust. The incremental changes to date to the international system for outbreak and pandemic prevention and readiness have not been enough.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to the death of some 22 million people and cost trillions. It was a “never again” moment.

And yet, even as the international community negotiates the future of pandemic preparedness, a preventable disaster is again playing out.

The “Bundibugyo” strain of Ebola virus — not new, but known — is killing people who are already vulnerable to insecurity and poverty. This outbreak will cost many lives, hundreds of millions of dollars, and many months of effort to contain. Last month, the Andes hantavirus — not new but known — triggered a major international response to an outbreak that may have been preventable. And mpox — not new, but known — previously spread from animals to humans. It is now spreading among humans.

Three outbreaks. All of them known pathogens. All of them predictable. None of them prevented.

What makes this more confounding is what happened while these events were still fresh. UN Member States agreed to schedule the High-Level Meeting on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response for the final Friday of United Nations General Assembly week — a day when many heads of state and government have already left New York, and those who remain have their minds on flights home.

Here is where we stand. Since COVID-19, the world has made some progress including adoption of the amended International Health Regulations and strengthened regional collaboration. But it is not ready for a new pandemic threat.

There is an incomplete Pandemic Agreement. There are too few new national outbreak and pandemic plans. The call for \$15 billion per year for pandemic prevention and preparedness has not come close to being met. There was a pledge to have diagnostics, vaccines and treatments ready within 100 days of a new threat being identified — and while there has been progress, for Bundibugyo, that will not happen.

At a time when humanity can sequence pathogens in hours, develop vaccines in months, and deploy artificial intelligence across entire economies, the world already has many of the tools it needs. The question is whether leaders will choose to invest in and use them.

We can no longer accept this cycle of panic and neglect.

In New York this September at the UNGA High-Level Meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response and in Geneva through the WHO Pandemic Agreement process, we are asking you to:

- **Finalize and ratify the WHO Pandemic Agreement** — as rapidly as possible and implement it.
- **Establish fair, predictable, and accessible financing** — for sustained prevention and preparedness investment, including for the 100 Days Mission, and for rapid emergency deployment when threats emerge. The current system remains fragmented and vastly under-funded.
- **Implement the One Health approach** — translate existing commitments into national and regional action plans that integrate human, animal and environmental health.
- **Accelerate a pathway to regional self-reliance** — including in the research, development, and manufacturing of medical countermeasures, with clear milestones and including technology transfer and capacity building.
- **Lay the groundwork to establish an outbreak and pandemic risk and readiness monitoring framework** — that tracks the full continuum from emerging risks, risk reduction, prevention and preparedness capacity through to response and recovery, pinpointing where weak spots remain and where investment is needed at every level.

We also call on all sides involved in conflict in the region affected by Bundibugyo Ebola to agree to a ceasefire so this outbreak can be ended.

Ebola. Hantavirus. Mpox. All since COVID-19. All predictable. All warnings.

These must be the last “rare but known” diseases that will surprise us. As we learned with COVID-19, in this very decade, they are only a warning of what a pandemic-prone pathogen could do.

A pandemic threat will come. The world is not ready. We have no choice but to demand political courage, sustained investment, and action.

To choose otherwise is indefensible.

Signatories

"Enough. It Is Time to Get Deadly Serious."

Members of:

The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response

RH Helen Clark (Co-Chair)
HE Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Co-Chair)
Mauricio Cárdenas
Michel Kazatchkine
Joanne Liu
Precious Matsoso
David Miliband
Anders Nordström
Thoraya Obaid
Raj Panjabi
Secretariat and advisors
Henry Mark
Rosemary McCarney
Christine McNab
Els Torreele
George Kronnisanyon Werner

The Panel for a Global Public Health Convention

Dame Barbara Stocking
Lawrence Gostin
Angel Gurría
Alexandra Finch
Jane Halton
Winnie Mpanju-Shumbusho

Jorge Saavedra

The Elders

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein
RH Helen Clark
Denis Mukwege
HE Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
Ernesto Zedillo

The Global Council on Inequality, AIDS and Pandemics

Winnie Byanyima
RH Helen Clark
Matthew Kavanagh
Sir Michael Marmot
Imraan Valodia

The Global Preparedness Monitoring Board

Joy Phumaphi (Co-Chair)
Palitha Abeykoon
Ibrahim Abubakar
Bente Angell-Hansen
Victor J. Dzau
Jayati Ghosh
Naoko Ishii
Ilona Kickbusch
Matthew Stone

Dr. Javid Abdelmoneim, President, MSF International, Switzerland

Prof. Brendan Crabb AC, Chair, Australian Global Health Alliance, Australia

Richard Adegbola, Chairman / Professor, National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC), Abuja, Nigeria

Peter Aduda, Programmes Coordinator, Raising Voices for Empowerment and Development, Kenya

Dr. Ayoade Alakija, Board Chair, FIND (Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics), Nigeria

Harry Ben Alpha, Programme Manager, Consortium for the Advancement of Rights of Key Affected Populations (CARKAP), Sierra Leone

Aggrey Aluso, Executive Director, Resilience Action Network Africa (RANA), Kenya

Victor Ambros, 2024 Nobel Laureate in Medicine/Physiology, University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School, USA

Audrey Arnal, Researcher, IRD, France

Marta Martinez Aviles, Researcher, PREZODE Steering Committee (Europe), CISA-INIA/CSIC, Spain

Shashika Bandara, Senior Lecturer, Monash University Malaysia, Malaysia

Ariane Bauernfeind, Professor, Andalusian School of Public Health, Spain

Iris Bernheim, Policy and Advocacy Officer, Results Canada, Canada

Dr. Belen Borrego, Scientist, CISA-INIA/CSIC, Spain

Mark Brender, National Director, Partners in Health Canada, Canada

Sara Canoyra, PhD Student, CISA-INIA-CSIC, Spain

Arthur L. Caplan, Professor Emeritus, NYU Grossman School of Medicine, USA

Courtney Carson, Senior Director, Programs, rani, USA

Adrienne K. Chan, Associate Professor, Division of Infectious Diseases, University of Toronto, Canada

John F. Clauser, Nobel Laureate in Physics 2022; Retired Physicist, USA

J.M. Coetzee, Nobel Laureate in Literature 2003; Writer, Australia

Emily Conron, Director of Global and Federal Affairs, The Task Force for Global Health, USA

Colette Cunningham, Lecturer, School of Public Health, University College Cork, Ireland

Paul Davis, Policy, Pandemics, and Partnerships Advisor, Health In Harmony, USA

Sheila Davis, CEO, Partners In Health, USA

Sinead Delany-Moretlwe, Professor of Global Health and Infectious Diseases, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Elisabeth Dibongue, Secretary General, PREZODE (Preventing Zoonotic Disease Emergence), France

Nguyen Thi Dien, Associate Professor, Vietnam National University of Agriculture, Vietnam

Fatima Docrat, Policy Manager, CEPI, UK

Guilherme Duarte, Director, UNITE — Parliamentarians Network for Global Health, Portugal

Ranna Eardley-Patel, STEG Member, International Pandemic Preparedness Secretariat (IPPS), UK

Mohamed ElBaradei, Nobel Peace Laureate 2005; Director General Emeritus, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Egypt

Kinz Ul Eman, CEO, DOPASI Foundation, Pakistan

Juan Carlos Espinosa, Scientific Researcher, CISA-INIA-CSIC, Spain

Dr. Pablo Estrella-Porter, Chair, WMA Junior Doctors Network, Spain

Lee Fairlie, Director Maternal and Child Health; Associate Professor, Wits RHI, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Jovita Fernández-Pinero, Senior Researcher, Virologist, Centro de Investigación en Sanidad Animal (CISA-INIA-CSIC), Spain

Andrew Zachary Fire, Professor of Pathology and Genetics, Stanford University School of Medicine, USA

Joachim Frank, Nobel Laureate in Chemistry 2017; Professor, Columbia University, USA

Dr. Tom Frieden, President and CEO, Resolve to Save Lives, USA

Sheldon Lee Glashow, Nobel Laureate in Physics 1979; Professor of Physics Emeritus, Boston University, USA

Rebecca F. Grais, Executive Director, Pasteur Network, France

Dr. Maria S. Guevara, International Medical Secretary, MSF International, Switzerland

Jane Halton, Board Chair, CEPI, Australia

Leland Hartwell, Nobel Laureate in Medicine 2001; Professor, Arizona State University, USA

Richard Hatchett, Chief Executive Officer, CEPI, Norway

Health and Global Policy Institute (HGPI), Japan

Lisa Hilmi, Executive Director, CORE Group, USA

Soawapak Hinjoy, President, PREZODE, Thailand

Sir Michael Houghton, Nobel Laureate in Medicine 2020; Professor, University of Alberta, Canada
Lou Ignarro, Nobel Laureate in Medicine 1998; Professor Emeritus, UCLA School of Medicine, USA
Kashef Ijaz, Vice President, Health Programs, The Carter Center, USA
Nina Jamal, Senior Head of Global Affairs, FOUR PAWS International, Austria
Brian Josephson, Nobel Laureate in Physics 1973; Emeritus Professor, Cambridge University, UK
Hyacinthe Kankeu Tchewonpi, Health Economist, USA
Peter Kayanga, Director, Disability Peoples Forum Uganda, Uganda
Dr. Vanessa Kerry, CEO, Seed Global Health, USA
Dr. Harjyot Khosa, Director, Access, Health Applications, Canada
Jerome H. Kim, Director General, International Vaccine Institute, Republic of Korea
Jacques Kwibuka, Founder and Executive Director, Informed Future Generations, Rwanda
Prof. Helena Legido-Quigley, Professor, Imperial College London, UK
Manon Lelarge, Program Manager, Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières, France
Sharon Lewin, Director, Doherty Institute, University of Melbourne, Australia
Dennis Liotta, Professor of Chemistry, Pharmacology and Chemical Biology, Emory University, USA
Selina Namchee Lo, Executive Director, Australian Global Health Alliance, Australia
Shingai Machingaidze, STEG Co-Chair, International Pandemic Preparedness Secretariat (IPPS), South Africa
Shabir Madhi, Professor of Vaccinology, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa
Anna Marry, Head of Global Policy and Advocacy, Brooke Action for Working Horses and Donkeys, UK
Barry James Marshall, Nobel Laureate in Medicine 2005; Physician and Professor of Microbiology, The Marshall Centre, University of Western Australia, Australia
Arthur B. McDonald, Nobel Laureate in Physics 2015, Queen's University, Kingston, Canada
John Meade, Senior Program Manager — Policy, AVAC, USA
Nivian Montes de Oca Martínez, Director General, CENSA, Cuba
Lourdes Jiménez Mora, Coordinadora, Proyecto ARPA México, Mexico
Mario Santos Moreira, President, Fiocruz, Brazil
Roger Myerson, Nobel Laureate in Economics 2007; Professor of Economics and Public Policy, University of Chicago, USA
Dr. Mona Nemer, Chair, International Pandemic Preparedness Secretariat (IPPS), Canada
Patricia Cristina da Costa Neves, Head of RNA Products Development, Bio-Manguinhos / FIOCRUZ, Brazil
Prof. Edward Nicol, Senior Specialist Scientist, South African Medical Research Council, South Africa
Dr. Priya Nori, Infectious Diseases Physician, Montefiore Health System / Albert Einstein College of Medicine, USA
Dr. Deo Nshimirimana, Chair, WHO African Region Technical Advisory Group for Epidemic Preparedness and Response, Burundi
Dr. Paul Offit, Director, Vaccine Education Center, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, USA
Madhukar Pai, Professor & Chair, McGill School of Population and Global Health, Canada
Ellie Parravani, Senior Advocacy Advisor, Action for Animal Health, UK
Prof. Anushka Patel, CEO, The George Institute for Global Health, Australia
Christina Pettan-Brewer, Associate Professor and Director, Global One Health, School of Medicine, University of Washington, USA
Marisa Peyre, Co-Founder and Global Science Leader, PREZODE, France
Alexandra Phelan, Associate Professor, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, USA/Australia
Dr. Peter Piot, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine; Co-Chair, High Level Panel, Accra Reset, UK
David Politzer, Nobel Laureate in Physics 2004; Professor, California Institute of Technology, USA

Saskia Popescu, Assistant Professor / CEO, University of Maryland / GHSN, USA/Australia
Dr. Megan Ranney, Dean, Yale School of Public Health, USA
Helen Rees, Professor, Wits RHI, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa
Paula Reges, Advisor on Global Health Affairs, Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz), Brazil
Charles M. Rice, Nobel Laureate in Medicine 2020; Professor, The Rockefeller University, USA
Richard J. Roberts, Nobel Laureate in Medicine 1993; CSO, New England Biolabs, USA
Benjamin Roche, Research Director, IRD, France
Gracia Violeta Ross Quiroga, HIV, Reproductive Health and Pandemics, World Council of Churches, Switzerland
Kiat Ruxrungtham, Director and Professor of Medicine, Chula Vaccine Research Center, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
Anthony Scott, Chair, WHO Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Kenya
Sego Seferian, Co-Founder / CEO, The Society for Children Orphaned By AIDS (SOCOBA), USA
George P. Smith, Nobel Laureate in Chemistry 2018; Professor Emeritus of Biological Sciences, University of Missouri, USA
Lynda Stuart, Founder & Principal, Generative Innovation, USA
Jack W. Szostak, Nobel Laureate in Chemistry 2009; Professor, University of Chicago, USA
Yassen Tcholakov, Assistant Professor, McGill University, Canada
Petro Terblanche, CEO, Afrigen Biologics, South Africa
Eloise Todd, Executive Director and Founder, rani, Belgium
Harold Varmus, Nobel Laureate in Medicine 1989; Professor, Weill Cornell Medicine, USA
Cathy Vaughan, Director, Nossal Institute for Global Health, Australia
Neil Vora, Executive Director, Preventing Pandemics at the Source, USA
Dr. Niteen Wairagkar, STEG Member, International Pandemic Preparedness Secretariat (IPPS), India
Drew Weissman, Nobel Laureate in Medicine 2023; Roberts Family Professor of Vaccine Research, University of Pennsylvania, USA
Kristine Atsianji Yakhama, Coordinator, Maternal Nutrition, Good Health Community Programmes, Kenya
Michael W. Young, Nobel Laureate in Medicine 2017; Professor, The Rockefeller University, USA