

## To Stop Disease X, Accountability Key to New Pandemic Treaty, Says GPHC

***Global leaders unite behind make or break Pandemic Treaty talks that are key to strengthening the world's ability to contain outbreaks and safeguard societies and economies.***

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LONDON & MIAMI--(BUSINESS WIRE)--To prevent future outbreaks from becoming global pandemics, an independent coalition of global leaders has called for an accountable international system that enables countries at every income level to detect, alert and respond to health threats. Through concrete solutions, accountability measures and governance structures, The Panel for a Global Public Health Convention (GPHC) proposes a bold path forward to dramatically strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness and response systems through a new Pandemic Treaty or Convention.

**“We have the lessons and tools to change the way the world responds next time – let’s now put them to work through a new Pandemic Treaty.”**

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Now in the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic, as new waves continue to rip through countries, the Panel warns that alarming deficits and gaps in compliance remain unaddressed along the continuum of what an effective epidemic and pandemic response could look like. Not only are countries no better prepared today to stop disease X, but the current international system has led to an unequal, two-tier response where one third of the world’s population still remain unvaccinated, which could yet undermine all the progress made to date.

“Countries need to wake up because global health security is only as strong as its weakest link,” said Barbara M. Stocking, M.A., Chair of GPHC. “Building a new Pandemic Treaty rooted in solidarity, transparency, accountability and equity is non-negotiable – it is in every country’s self-interest.”

The new set of recommendations call for a positively incentivised system where compliance with agreed

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“Whether we’re talking about the climate crisis or the next global health security threat, we will not have impact without accountability,” said Lawrence O. Gostin, J.D., University Professor and Founding O’Neill Chair in Global Health Law, Georgetown University. “Currently, there are no incentives and accountability measures for countries to contain outbreaks before they become pandemics, and many governments haven’t complied with the regulations we do have. More than ever, we need a binding international treaty to reform our system.”

The Panel recognizes that while agreed indicators for pandemic preparedness will vary based on a country’s current capacities and financial outlook, all targets must be ambitious and take a whole-of-government approach. All countries should be accountable to meet their targets, and an independent body responsible for tracking and monitoring progress or regression.

“It’s in everyone’s national interest to leave no one behind. Yet, the last two years have shown us that marginalized communities and those living in lower income regions disproportionately bear the brunt of COVID-19’s debilitating effects on people and societies,” says John Dramani Mahama, Former President of Ghana. “We cannot ignore those who were forgotten the first time around. A new Pandemic Treaty must ensure life-saving tools and resources are available to people everywhere.”

The set of recommendations emphasize that sufficient funds will be needed to support a new international architecture for pandemic preparedness and response, namely, predictable, sustainable and timely funding. A multilateral facility would enable easy access to funds and ensure low- and middle-income countries are able to meet determined international requirements to detect, report and respond to health threats.

“It’s no good creating a new Pandemic Treaty if we don’t ensure countries can access the funds needed to comply with it,” says Angel Gurría, M.A., Former Secretary-General, OECD; Former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Finance and Public Credit, Mexico. “From the very beginning of the pandemic through to today, funding for the global response has been slow, unreliable and insufficient. We expect things to get better, but how can we hope for better results if we’re not willing to pay for them?”

Key to an effective Pandemic Treaty will be measures that secure mutual assurance along the timeline of events. The Panel argues that all agreements on who is required to take what action and when must be negotiated and determined to ensure actors can mobilize in time to contain outbreaks. This includes accountability for preparation; transparent and real-time reporting of health threats; implementation of evidence-based public health measures; information sharing, including of genetic sequences, specimens and samples; equitable distribution of pandemic goods; as well as a fully funded financing facility.

“If we do not transform learnings from the last two years into an effective global system capable of stopping the next outbreak, future generations will look back in disbelief at our failure to stop preventable deaths,” said Laura Chinchilla Miranda, M.P.P., Former President of Costa Rica and Vice President of the World Leadership Alliance - Club de Madrid. “We have the lessons and tools to change the way the world responds next time – let’s now put them to work through a new Pandemic Treaty.”

The Panel notes that for a transformed international system for pandemic preparedness and response to work, it must also be coherently governed. An overarching governance body overseen at the heads of state level would need to ensure equity and inclusion, coordination, trust between all parties and accountability. As global health leaders continue to negotiate a Pandemic Treaty this year, the Panel urges them to take bold action and ensure no person will ever have to endure a pandemic that could have been prevented.

**Additional quotes:**

**Ricardo B. Leite, M.D., Member of Parliament; Vice-President of the Social Democratic Party, Portugal;**

**Founder & President, UNITE:** “Ethical values of fairness and equity were tossed out the window in the last two years. If we want a more secure and healthy world, we need to start rebuilding trust in the international system and among nations. For that to happen, we need a transparent and transformed international governing system for pandemic preparedness and response.”

**Jane Halton, P.S.M., Officer of the Order of Australia; Chair, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations; Former Secretary of Health and Secretary of Finance, Australia:** “Decades of social and economic progress have been put at risk because of the inequitable pandemic response and distribution of COVID-19 tools over the last two years. We now have the hindsight and solutions to ensure all countries can access the same level of preparedness and response measures. Next time there will be no excuse.”

**Jemilah B. Mahmood, M.D., Executive Director, Sunway Centre for Planetary Health, Sunway University Malaysia:** “When countries shirk their responsibility to protect citizens from health threats, they are infringing on everyone’s fundamental human right to health. While many countries have gone above and beyond to protect their citizens from COVID-19, we cannot afford another piecemeal approach. We need a system that holds all countries to account and ensures assistance for those that need it.”

**Maha El Rabbat, Ph.D., M.Sc. Former Minister of Health and Population, Egypt:** “We must break the cycle of vaccine nationalism, which continues to cripple the COVID-19 response effort. Countries need to realign their priorities and realize that this pandemic, or any future outbreak, will not end until we start sharing data, research, know-how and life-saving innovations in a timely and transparent manner.”

**Jorge Saavedra, M.D., M.P.H., M.Sc.; Executive Director, AHF Global Public Health Institute:** “Too many voices have gone unheard in the pandemic response. If we want to get it right the next time around and create a truly equitable Pandemic Treaty, everyone needs a place at the decision-making table – from scientists, civil society and other expert groups. We cannot guarantee the best outcome without them.”

#### Note for editors:

*The Panel for a Global Public Health Convention (GPHC) is an independent coalition of global leaders working to strengthen the world’s ability to prevent, prepare, and respond to infectious disease outbreaks before they become widespread pandemics. The Panel was founded in 2020 in response to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic with the aim of bridging critical gaps in the global public health architecture and policy frameworks by promulgating a new global public health treaty or convention in an effort to ensure another pandemic of such magnitude does not happen again. To learn more, visit [www.gphcpanel.org](http://www.gphcpanel.org), and follow us on Twitter @GPHC\_Panel.*

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**RICARDO B. LEITE**  
Member of Parliament, Vice-President of the Social Democratic Party, Parliamentary Group, President of Parliament, LEITE



Apr 15, 2022

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