

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE GROUP (3G) INPUT TO THE G20 ON PREPAREDNESS AND ACTIONS AGAINST PUBLIC HEALTH THREATS

1 The Global Governance Group (3G)¹ welcomes the strong advocacy by the G20 German Presidency to strengthen global preparedness and actions against public health threats arising from health emergencies and antimicrobial resistance.

Public Health Threats in Today's Context

2 The past decade has seen numerous *health emergencies* arising not just from natural and man-made disasters, but also infectious diseases. These include but are not limited to Avian Influenza, Ebola, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and Zika. With increased connectivity and air travel, infectious diseases can rapidly spread to all parts of the world within a very short time frame. All countries are vulnerable and we must work together to strengthen preparedness against such public health threats.

3 *Antimicrobial resistance* (AMR) is another public health threat that requires urgent global action. The 3G recognises that AMR will raise morbidity and mortality, as well as increase health care costs and reduce productivity. AMR will not only affect health care systems, but also adversely impact economies. We must be well-prepared and take urgent action to minimise the risk and impact of AMR.

The Crucial Role of the United Nations (UN) and its Agencies

4 Defense against global health threats requires close international cooperation and effective multilateral mechanisms. In this respect, the 3G appreciates the critical role of the UN and its agencies in focusing international attention on major public health threats. We note the convening of the UN High-Level Meeting on addressing AMR in 2016 and the endorsement by member states of the related Declaration on this important issue. The 3G further welcomes initiatives such as the UN Secretary-General's (UNSG) High-Level

¹ The 3G comprises the following Member States of the United Nations: Bahamas, Kingdom of Bahrain, Barbados, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Costa Rica, Republic of Finland, Guatemala, Jamaica, Kuwait, Principality of Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Principality of Monaco, Montenegro, New Zealand, Panama, Peru, Republic of the Philippines, State of Qatar, Republic of Rwanda, Republic of San Marino, Republic of Senegal, Republic of Singapore, Republic of Slovenia, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay and Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

Panel on the Global Response to Health Crises, the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s Health Emergency Programme and the World Bank's Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility.

5 The UN has also advanced global preparedness against public health threats through General Assembly resolutions such as 'Global health and foreign policy: health employment and economic growth'. These resolutions urge Member States to continue to consider health issues in the formulation of their foreign policy, and to develop resilient and sustainable systems capable of responding effectively to outbreaks and emergencies. The UN has designated 'Ensuring Healthy Lives and Promoting Well-Being' as one of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These efforts reflect the political commitment at the highest level to address public health threats.

G20 Leadership

6 On this note, the 3G commends the German G20 Presidency's reaffirmation of the importance of global preparedness and actions against public health threats. The German G20 Presidency will be convening the first-ever G20 Health Ministers Meeting which will include a health emergency simulation exercise. This will focus political leadership on improving the global health crisis management system, and in strengthening health systems to bolster preparedness against public health threats.

Global Health Crisis Management

7 The 3G notes the central role played by the WHO in *global health crisis management*, and agrees that effective implementation of the International Health Regulations in all countries is key to ensuring global public health security. To this effect, we recognise the importance of countries' participation in the Joint External Evaluations of the IHR (International Health Regulations) core capacities conducted by the WHO. The 3G also welcomes other major initiatives to strengthen global public health security such as the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI). In relation to the work of CEPI, the 3G would like to emphasise the critical need to ensure that life-saving pharmaceutical innovations such as vaccines against epidemic threats are made available to all countries in an equitable manner. The 3G is of the view that the G20 is well-placed to support these important initiatives to better manage health emergencies.

Action against Antimicrobial Resistance

8 The 3G supports the Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance drawn up by the WHO in collaboration with the World Organization on Animal Health (OIE) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The 3G also welcomes the UNSG's recent official establishment of the Interagency Coordination Group on AMR, in relation with the Declaration of the UN High-Level Meeting on addressing AMR in 2016. We encourage the formulation and implementation of National Action Plans against AMR through the One Health approach, which integrates actions under the human health, veterinary and environmental sectors. We recognise the importance of strengthening surveillance systems on antimicrobial resistance, promoting rational use of antibiotics in the human and animal sectors, as well as designing conducive incentive mechanisms for R&D in this area, in dialogue with the private sector. To these effects, the 3G appreciates the important role that the G20 can play in accelerating global action against AMR.

Health Systems Strengthening

9 Global health crisis management and action against AMR are important, but not sufficient on their own to ensure preparedness against public health threats. The 3G would like to stress that this must be complemented by the strengthening of *health systems* at both the local and national levels, covering the entire spectrum of tertiary, secondary and primary care. A strong public health system is one that has established surveillance systems for early detection of public health events, including AMR developments; appropriate risk assessment and risk communications; and high vaccination coverage. It must also encompass emergency preparedness, response and community mobilisation, including working closely with other government and non-government bodies. This public health system should be supported by a hospital system that is equipped with effective infection control and appropriate medical expertise, and a primary care system that is able to detect health threats early and provide timely alerts to the public health authorities. These systems in turn need to be supported by good laboratory infrastructure.

10 Effective training and development of the public health and health care workforce is critical to ensure the effectiveness of the health system. In this regard, the 3G commends the many G20 countries which have been providing support to developing countries towards this effort. The 3G calls on the G20 to continue, and where necessary, step up its support to strengthen health systems in developing countries. Concurrently, the 3G recognises that all countries have the primary responsibility of strengthening their own health systems in partnership with WHO, as well as other international organisations and

development partners. The 3G therefore, encourages all countries to work towards achieving and maintaining the necessary core capacities to detect, assess, report and respond to public health events, as required under the IHR.

Conclusion

11 In support of public health preparedness, the 3G urges the G20 to continue engaging the WHO, other UN member states and agencies, as well as international organisations in an inclusive and transparent manner. This will help to ensure that G20 initiatives complement and strengthen the work being undertaken by the international community and the UN system, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

12 The 3G looks forward to working closely with the German G20 presidency to foster stronger international collaboration to strengthen global preparedness and actions against public health threats arising from health emergencies and AMR. The 3G also looks forward to the continued inclusion of ‘Public Health’ as one of the focus areas under future presidencies of the G20.

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