



**International Atomic Energy Agency**  
**IAEA Statement**

**152nd Session of the World Health Organization Executive Board**  
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**Agenda Item 12.1. Strengthening WHO Preparedness for and response to health emergencies – Strengthening the global architecture for health emergency preparedness, response and resilience**

Chair,

The IAEA has worked closely with the WHO and the FAO since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic to provide a coordinated response to requests from its Member States. As the world is still tackling the Covid-19 pandemic, we continue assessing important lessons learned on vulnerabilities to zoonotic diseases. This is not the first and will not be the last pandemic but for the future, we must, and will be, better prepared. We have to work together collaboratively and find innovative tools to better support Member States veterinary laboratories globally to tackle outbreaks at the animal-human interface.

Two years ago, the IAEA launched the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action Initiative, or ZODIAC, with the goal of strengthening the preparedness and capabilities of Member States to respond to the threats of zoonotic diseases, such as Covid-19, Mpox and other emerging and re-emerging diseases.

To achieve this, the IAEA recognised the importance of building strong and resilient laboratory networks that can engage more efficiently in pandemic preparedness. Today, ZODIAC comprises of 150 ZODIAC National Coordinators and 126 ZODIAC National Laboratories. We have trained over 1,000 nationals from over 100 Member States through virtual training courses and hands-on training on whole-genome sequencing at the IAEA's nuclear application laboratories in Seibersdorf. The IAEA is

also carrying out face-to-face training in different regions tailored to the specific needs of countries. Most recently, the IAEA held a training course in Senegal on the verification of Standard Operating Procedures for new serological and molecular techniques with participants from 25 French-speaking African countries. Regional Research Projects continue to be developed to enhance laboratory preparedness for the detection and control of relevant priority diseases for Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America with international experts in the field of veterinary science as well as experts from WHO, FAO and WOA. In human health, the IAEA is working on a research project that focuses on using radiation imaging to characterize disease-specific patterns in patients infected by zoonotic diseases. Last year, the IAEA launched the ZODIAC Portal, an information and resource website with visitors benefitting from educational videos and training materials made available free of charge and with open access.

The IAEA continues to work closely with WHO and FAO including recently for the workshop on 'Mpox, and Lassa Fever Infections in Animal Reservoirs and the Risks for Public Health Transmission'.

We look forward to continuing our close engagement with partners like WHO and others to support better preparedness for and response to health emergencies for the benefit of all our Member States.

I thank you Chair.