

## Summary

**GPMB Board Meeting, 1-2 April 2019**

**IFRC, Geneva, Switzerland**

The Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (GPMB) met on April 1-2, 2019 to review global preparedness for infectious disease outbreaks, pandemic risks, and other emergencies with significant health consequences. The Board concluded that while there has been progress in some areas, critical gaps remain.

Presentations were made on GPMB commissioned papers exploring country capacity, financing, research and demonstration (R&D), governance and coordination for preparedness, and on a special Independent Oversight Advisory Committee study on lessons learned/lost from past and current Ebola virus outbreaks (EVD) and implications for health emergencies. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus presented on the status of the current Ebola response in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and emerging lessons.

Board members acknowledged some encouraging developments over the past three years in improving global preparedness. These include: (a) strengthened emergency preparedness and response capabilities at WHO; (b) greater numbers of countries completing National Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS) and IHR self-assessment reporting tool (SPAR) and voluntary Joint External Evaluation (JEE) assessments; (c) the establishment and use of emergency financing mechanisms, including the WHO's [Contingency Fund for Emergencies](#) (CFE); the World Bank Group's [Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility](#) (PEF) and the launch of the [Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Initiatives](#) (CEPI) to develop vaccines for a set of pathogens with pandemic potential; and (d) the development of a platform to fast track vaccine development for Ebola and the deployment/use of an effective experimental Ebola vaccine in the current DRC outbreak, along with other with other investigational treatment approaches.

The Board highlighted several critical issues including:

- *the lack of community trust and acceptance has emerged as a critical bottleneck for effective preparedness and response;*
- *the lack of progress in mobilizing domestic and international financing to prepare for and respond to emergencies, and in financing implementation of NAPHS and preparedness in low- and middle-income countries;*
- *the lack of adequate investment in research and development for new tools and technologies needed to mitigate future outbreaks, especially for novel pathogens, particularly medicine and rapid diagnostic countermeasures;*
- *the need to align preparedness and universal health coverage to maximise synergies*
- *the continuing fragmentation and weak coordination among the various global institutions involved in preparedness; and*
- *the lack of standardized definitions of preparedness (including their use to monitor financing/expenditures)*

The current DRC EVD outbreak highlighted the prominence of very difficult conditions, insecurity, lack of community trust, and the impact of non-health sector contributing factors that hamper effective containment of the outbreak. The Board expressed its thanks to WHO and all partners who have been tirelessly working to control the outbreak under difficult conditions.

Experiences from the DRC EVD outbreak and other health emergencies (e.g., Madagascar and plague) suggest a new world and reality—a “new normal” – characterized by the increasing frequency of and difficulty in managing high impact epidemics and health emergencies occurring in fragile and vulnerable country settings. The precarious situation is aggravated by simultaneous crises, many of which occur amidst prolonged conflict; new types of security issues; lack of trust in institutions; and synergies with other big problems (e.g., urbanization, high population density and movements, ecological and climate changes, complex societies, etc.). This is further compounded by potential existential risks, e.g. a high impact airborne-pathogen pandemic and risks associated with new and mutating viruses.

The Board identified actions and priorities for their attention moving forward, including:

- *placing communities at the centre of preparedness, building trust before any crisis, and empowering community engagement and participation in preventing, preparing for and responding to health crises*
- *global preparation for a fast-moving, high impact airborne pathogen outbreak such as for influenza, or an accidental or deliberate release*
- *improving financing for global preparedness and response, including replenishing the CFE, securing funding for NAPHS, and using innovative financing strategies (e.g., including preparedness in IDA19; & in IMF Article 4 processes)*
- *research and development, notably for developing and rolling out countermeasures for emerging threats,*
- *actively engaging multiple sectors of society, and strengthening governance and coordination*
- *improving measurement approaches for monitoring and accountability, and putting forth standardized definitions for preparedness*

The GPMB is committed to shine a light on the most critical gaps in global preparedness for outbreaks, pandemics and health crises, and to ensure that robust measurement is in place to combat these threats to our common security. The GPMB will issue its first annual report on the status of global preparedness for health crises, including recommendations and potential solutions in autumn 2019.