High-level meeting on advancing global health security: from commitments to actions, 27-29 June 2016, Bali, Indonesia

Meeting summary and recommendations

This meeting brought together 250 participants and observers from 52 countries and 28 organizations. Its goal was to use current momentum and recent commitments to drive sustained actions for global health security. The agenda included panel discussions, parallel sessions and four working groups that addressed a health emergency scenario from different perspectives. A number of side events also took place, notably a World Bank Group meeting on sustainable financing for preparedness, a joint external evaluation (JEE) Alliance meeting; and a meeting on zoonoses convened by the Government of Indonesia.

‘Never waste a crisis’

Since the Cape Town meeting on ‘Building Health Security Beyond Ebola’ in July 2015, there has been a concerted effort to use the lessons of Ebola, SARS, and other recent emergencies and humanitarian disasters to scale up global efforts to prevent, detect and respond to health emergencies. Important initiatives such as the Joint External Evaluation (JEE) tool and the Strategic Partnership Portal (SPP) have taken off, and their early benefits were clear at the Bali meeting.

Many frameworks support countries as they prepare for health emergencies. These include the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) framework; the Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction; Universal Health Coverage (UHC 2030) and the Sustainable Development Goals; the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA); a number of G7 initiatives; the One Health approach; Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR); the Asia Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases (APSED); and EURO 2020.

Meeting participants in Bali voiced a common understanding, using lessons from major events to reach new clarity on how emergency preparedness should be strengthened, and how to ensure emergency preparedness is as inclusive and sustainable as possible.

‘We need inclusive and accountable partnerships’

The meeting highlighted the importance of evidence-based joint planning, information sharing, and strengthening of intersectoral collaboration through national and international partnerships.

Participants highlighted the need for WHO to develop all components of the new monitoring and evaluation framework for IHR in addition to JEE. Countries underlined the strengths of the JEE tool, which include voluntary country participation, the multisectoral linkages made at national and subnational levels during the JEE process, and the transparency and openness of data sharing during and after missions. To drive the process forward, the need was highlighted for more experts to join JEE missions.
Investments in preparedness should start with strong ownership and supportive leadership at the highest level in countries. Country-owned action plans are needed that reflect national priorities, backed by secure domestic investments, engagement of all stakeholders, and optimized use of resources. Such domestic investment must be complemented by decisions on international assistance based on clearly articulated gaps and needs; and the provision of strategically planned, well-coordinated technical support.

‘Health security begins at the level of individual men, women and children and their communities’
Participants highlighted the many different, critical roles that technical partners—including NGOs, UN agencies and humanitarian and other actors—play in strengthening national preparedness. They addressed globalization and the fact that many borders are not fixed, and are transcended by constantly mobile populations that need to be better understood.

Partners illustrated that health security is as important to individuals as it is to communities and countries: investing in the core health service delivery and workforce remains a top priority. When addressing the consequences of health emergencies, participants demonstrated the need for collaboration across sectors, and the consequent need to understand different underlying agendas, recognize WHO’s leadership, define areas of overlap, and develop solutions tailored to local systems.

‘Towards a strategic framework for emergency preparedness’
Effective investment in preparedness saves resources in emergency response. To take advantage of this, participants highlighted the importance of a strategic framework for guiding investment in line with priority preparedness actions in countries. The framework should reflect the combined knowledge and achievements of stakeholders in human health, animal health, disaster management and non-health sectors. Such a framework, once finalised, will lead to more sustained support for health systems that are both operationally ready and sufficiently resilient to withstand shocks inflicted by emergencies.

This framework needs to drive the following action: adoption of all-hazards approaches based on prioritised risks; increased investment in risk mitigation and prevention; focus on sustained investment in health systems and vulnerable communities; assured political leadership and regional collaboration; promotion of self-reliance with mutual accountability; broader multisectoral approaches; engagement of communities across the whole of society; and widespread movement beyond the provision of short-term technical health expertise to the development of resilient health systems.

Recommendations and actions for all stakeholders
The Bali meeting participants recommend that:

1. **Current momentum around health security must be sustained and scaled up through continued, coordinated action led by WHO.** Through concrete, step-by-step actions for preparedness, health systems must be strengthened in line with universal health coverage (UHC), thereby strengthening health security.

2. The new monitoring and evaluation framework for IHR represents a step forward. Further concrete action is needed to translate identified gaps into financed action and, eventually, into preparedness outcomes. **Results of the JEE and/or other assessments should be used to review plans and fund and accelerate actions to meet priority needs.**
3. In the finalization of the strategic framework for emergency preparedness, WHO must take into account key points from the discussions held during the meeting—note that the strategic framework aims to strengthen emergency preparedness across communities at sub-national, national, and international levels.

4. In implementing the framework, participants request that:
   
a. The framework is used to reflect a common platform for stakeholder engagement and for fostering collective partnership for action.

b. The outcomes of emergency preparedness assessments are included as part of strategic long-term national health plans. These should strive for outcomes linked to: (1) operational readiness; (2) resilience of health systems and workforces; (3) One Health; (4) a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach to preparedness, and (5) resilience of communities.

c. Prioritized investments in preparedness are driven by strong political leadership and sustainable domestic resources. Operationalizing preparedness requires action and constant monitoring that needs continuous political and financial support. Countries—especially the most vulnerable countries—need these most, if they are to reduce the human, economic and social costs of health emergencies.

5. A sustained, long-term mechanism is needed through which financial and technical resources can be channeled to priority needs. Alongside domestic leadership mentioned above, international financial and technical support remains crucial to support the preparedness activities of ministries, civil society and technical partners.

6. All stakeholders must share information regarding ongoing and planned investments to strengthen global health security, and must use WHO’s Strategic Partnership Portal (SPP) to highlight needs, gaps, priorities and achievements in advancing health security. Participants drew attention to the SPP’s usefulness as a tool for transparent coordination between countries, donors, partners and WHO, in line with the principles for aid effectiveness and UHC.

**Immediate next steps**

- In the month following the meeting, strengthen the strategic framework for emergency preparedness and share it with stakeholders;
- Initiate the roll-out of the framework in all countries and territories, backed by strong national leadership and support from partners;
- Monitor and assess the roll-out of the framework;
- Update the SPP regularly with information from countries and partners;
- Use the framework to inform decisions on Country Health Emergency Preparedness;
- Strengthen existing partnerships and develop new ones;
- Continue discussions with financing institutions;
- Share the outcomes of the Bali meeting, and advocate for the multisectoral implementation of emergency preparedness at every level, in accordance with national priorities.