

Intergovernmental Negotiating Body to draft and negotiate a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. Proposal for the WHO Pandemic Agreement (version - 13 November 2024)

IFRC reflections

1. We welcome the Recognition of International Humanitarian Law

It is essential to acknowledge the significance of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in **safeguarding health services and protecting lives in times of crisis**. IHL serves as a foundation for upholding human dignity and ensuring humanitarian assistance reaches those in need. Its principles are crucial across all aspects of public health and emergency response, setting standards for fairness, non-discrimination, and access to lifesaving care, especially during conflicts and other high-stakes situations.

2. We welcome the strong commitment to Equity and Equitable Access

There is a strong emphasis on the importance of equity and fair access to health resources globally. Every region, regardless of economic status, must have the capability to conduct research, develop and manufacture medical solutions, and efficiently distribute lifesaving tools like vaccines, diagnostic tests, and treatments. This requires a firm commitment to creating an inclusive healthcare infrastructure that ensures accessibility for all, particularly marginalized or underserved populations. Policies and frameworks should be designed to protect and promote universal access, so no region or community is left behind in accessing essential health services.

3. Role of Community Health Workers

Recognizing the invaluable contributions of healthcare workers, it is also critical to highlight the essential role of community health workers and volunteers. These frontline individuals often serve as the first point of contact for many communities, especially in remote or resource-limited areas. Their role should be prioritized and strengthened, as they play a vital part in extending healthcare access, providing education, and supporting preventive measures. Proper support, training, and resources should be allocated to empower community health workers and volunteers, enabling them to provide consistent and high-quality care.

4. Importance of Risk Communication and Community Engagement

Emphasizing the importance of transparent and effective risk communication and meaningful community engagement is fundamental to building resilient health systems. The involvement of communities and local frontline workers is crucial in establishing trust, dispelling misinformation, and encouraging public compliance with health measures. Further investment in these areas is necessary to ensure that community members and health workers are actively involved in public health initiatives and are provided with adequate resources, support, and protection. Such investments will strengthen the capacity of local health systems to prevent, detect, and respond effectively to public health threats.

5. Community Protection

Importance of community protection is crucial addressing both immediate health needs and long-term resilience. By prioritizing local engagement, equity, and preparedness, we aim to support communities that can protect themselves and contribute to global health security and UHC.

5. Inclusive Decision-Making Processes

Inclusive decision-making should be better emphasized/ It is vital for creating fair and representative health policies. Involving all nations in the negotiation and decision-making processes allows for a diverse range of perspectives, experiences, and priorities to be incorporated into policies. This inclusive approach fosters a sense of shared responsibility and accountability, ensuring that the solutions adopted are both equitable and relevant to the needs of all countries and communities.

6. Exploration of Flexible Financing Mechanisms

Addressing the economic disparities among nations requires flexible financing options that take into account the varying capacities of countries to contribute. Such mechanisms would allow for contributions based on a country's financial resources, promoting a more equitable model of global health funding. Flexibility in financing can enable more countries to participate in funding health initiatives, fostering a collaborative and sustainable approach to global health security and preparedness.

7. Highlighting the Role of Community Based Organizations and Civil Society

CBO and CSO play a pivotal role in advocating for public health, facilitating community engagement, and ensuring transparency and accountability in policy implementation. Highlighting their contributions is crucial, as they act as intermediaries between governments and communities, provide essential services, and often support marginalized populations. Their involvement should be recognized, and their voices included in decision-making processes to ensure that policies reflect the needs and perspectives of the populations they represent.

The IFRC is ready to provide further comments as required, and to share its experience in health and care.