

Forum: World and Health Organization (WHO)

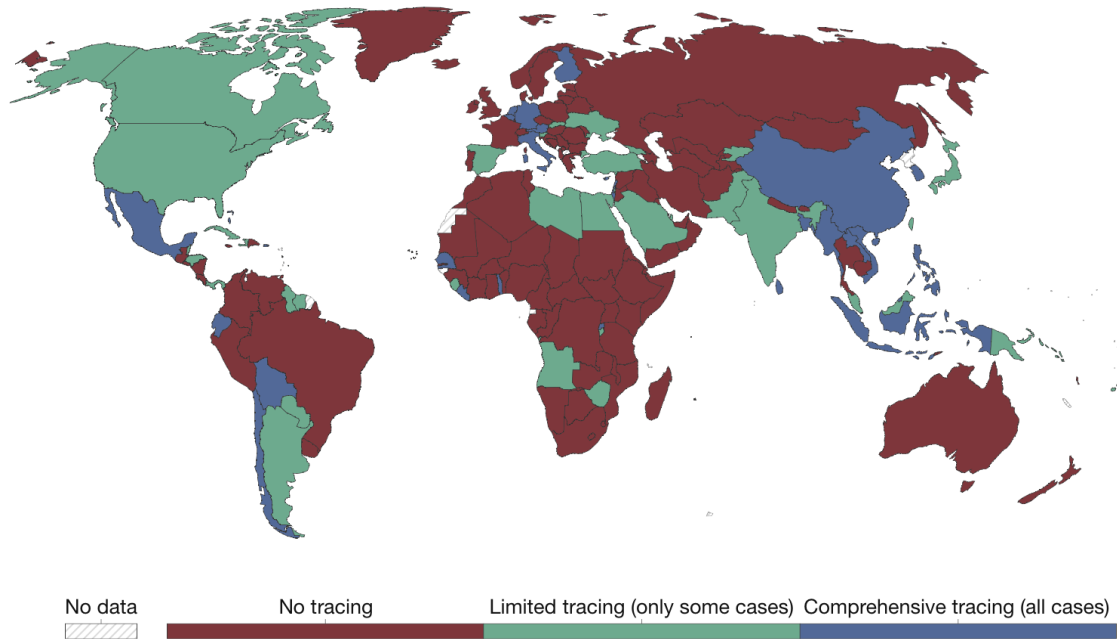
Issue: Looking at Strengthening Preparedness and Response to Pandemic Threats

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Introduction

The issue of preparing for global health crises has long been a concern, though in recent times it has grown in significance everywhere. The experience of COVID-19 underlined the need for organized, cooperative efforts to strengthen our readiness if and when other widespread outbreaks arise. pose a major challenge for public health systems, national stability, and the welfare of people all over the world, as their spread is difficult to predict. Looking at the most recent pandemic of COVID-19, some of the initial responses to the pandemic were international travel bans, social distancing measures, and closure of public clustered events. Although these are some effective measures to implement, the majority of countries around the world applied these measures either too late or too lenient which led to extensive infection and contamination. On a global scale, most countries are currently unprepared for any future pandemic or epidemics; which has, and if not acted upon, will result in huge economic losses and public health and safety issues.



Data source: Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker, Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford – Last updated 24 July 2023

Note: Our data on COVID-19 tests and positive rate is no longer updated since 23 June 2022.

OurWorldInData.org/coronavirus | CC BY

As seen by the data above, more than half of the countries in the world don't even have comprehensive tracking systems 3 years after the start of the outbreak. There is a lack of preparedness in most places around the world in terms of pandemic preparedness.

Definition of Key Terms:

1. **Pandemic:** The widespread on an infection over a country or or the world at a particular time
2. **LEDCs:** Less Economically Developed Countries, Countries that are considered LEDCs are classified as having low-income capital, and low quality of life.
3. **GHS:** Global Health Society, which involves governments and NGOs, International Agencies. And this group aims to address health challenges
4. **IHR:** International Health Regulations, this is a binding legal instrument which is part of the WHO framework, the IHR focuses on upholding the highest health standards.

5. **GHAS:** Global Health Security Agenda focuses on preventing the spread of infectious diseases, and detecting early signs, with this, it outlines ways to rapidly respond to these diseases to maintain high health standards.
6. **Treaty:** a formally concluded and ratified agreement between states.
7. **Multilateral:** Involved in taking part with 2 nations or more.
8. **Bilateral:** Involving a maximum of 2 countries, hence, the latin prefix bi meaning two.

Background Information

Global preparedness for future global pandemics involve numerous initiatives including collaborative national and international efforts in which nations need to learn and improve from previous mistakes in order to move forward. In historically significant cases such as the COVID-19, SARS, and HIV/AIDS pandemics, some key components to take into consideration is the surveillance and early detection of diseases, meaning that the WHO committee is working on it by gathering data. Their work ranges from monitoring in order to detect any possible threat at an early stage and ensuring that vaccine access alternatives must be involved in making vaccines for diseases such as Covid-19 accessible and available when necessary.

Historically, pandemics such as COVID-19, and SARS have experienced slow responses from the global community, considering that there was little-to-no information about the disease and its impacts provided and shared. Like all emerging diseases, they posed a major threat to our livelihoods due to the lack of preparedness, enforcements, and measures put into place. Even after breakthroughs were made in successfully creating vaccines and medicines, many in low-income regions were unable to obtain the necessary medication to diffuse the illness.

Medical poverty has been a huge issue that healthcare systems around the world are looking to tackle, in order to provide the vaccines and resources needed for emergency and pandemic-like scenarios. Furthermore, the WHO committee has also worked in the field of Research and Development by promoting the research and investment in immunology, virology and public health; its researches permit the development of

vaccines, diagnostics and the sharing of scientific knowledge on the global scale. Sharing and communication between member nations allows for a better structured, and well-prepared response to such epidemics, which historically, has not taken place in swift enough manners. Not only this, but governments are crucial in the role for strengthening preparedness, with the implementation of policies and subsidies giving stability in regions affected by such situations.

Current Situation

The current situation in terms of preparedness widely depends on the different national scales but on the global scale.

Country	GHS Index, score and rank
United States of America	75.9
Australia	71.1
Finland	70.9
Canada	69.8
Thailand	68.3

The GHS ranking has ranked all 195 countries from 0 being the worst to 100 being the best, each individual country has a total ranked 195 with an attributed score. The score is calculated by taking into accounts the prevention of a disease, the detection, its response to it, and other factors. The highest country here is the United States of America with a score of 75.9 and the lowest country being Somalia with a score of 16.0. These countries and scores are merely a small representation on how a preparation for a pandemic is managed throughout different countries before going on the global scale.



Global Standing

The state of preparedness for global pandemics has had many advances in the world combined with difficulties. There are things that were done like the Global Security Agenda creation in 2014 in the field of preventing diseases and pandemics working alongside multiple organizations and about 60 countries who helped during the covid 19 pandemic by working alongside multiple pharmaceutical companies in order to distribute vaccines. Other notable advances in the field of the prevention of pandemic would be the bilateral and multilateral agreements that were made by governments in order to collaborate on projects such as vaccines and plans, etc. Thanks to the global Covid -19 pandemics governments did make actions in order to prepare on future pandemics with the improving data of surveillance and sharing which is promising and has permitted governments to monitor important and new diseases in order to avoid pandemics, also the global healthcare strengthening with many healthcare systems in the world improving by strengthening it and so helping for future pandemics and to finish the global economic investments in research and development for pandemic preparedness having the focus of developing and creating new medication and advances for anti-drugs for viruses, therapeutics and future therapeutics. But these advances has led to difficulties with for example virus monitoring gaps meaning there is some gaps in surveillance which can affect the attempt to limit infection of a disease,the preparedness gaps in regions, some LEDCs countries do have some problems with the having of challenges in implanting responses to future pandemics and making these effective.The impact of infodemics with stopping the misinformation over a virus, infection, disease and so not helping future responses involving citizens and finally the long term effect meaning the effects whether they are moral or economic after a pandemic and whether they are negative or positive.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

The United States of America (USA)

The USA has a major role in global preparedness. A prime example of this can be their relationship with the Global Health Security Agenda, (GHSA). This organisation aims to strengthen the global ability to prevent, detect and respond to disease threats. By being actively involved in promoting the GHSA, the USA has improved their capacity building, providing their expertise and resources to aid other countries in developing their public health infrastructure. As well as commitment to the GHSA, encouraging global collaboration with the USA's high levels of support particularly in the financial and research sectors.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, is a vital health agency in the USA. Their primary mission is similar to the GHSA's, and aims to protect public health and safety from disease threats. They conduct immense amounts of research, provide guidance and education to their citizens, coordinate with local and international partners to enhance their emergency response program and oversee the vaccinations programs; overall, highly promoting public health and safety.

China

China has engaged in bilateral discussions, such as their cooperations with Africa, creating China-Africa friendly hospitals and carrying out multiple disease control projects. As well as multilateral dialogues and actions, one of which can be the BRICS health cooperation. Where nations Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, have cooperated on health related issues. China in this multilateral engagement is leading in producing vaccines for a cheap cost, increasing the percentage of health protection and preparedness for BRICS. As well as its contributions with the World Health Organisation, WHO, China participates in numerous discussions on global health policies and cooperation on international pandemics.

United Kingdom (UK)

The UK plays an important role in global health security through organizations such as Public England, which is an agency committed to improving public health and addressing any inequalities which are present with the local or national government. However, the nation is majorly involved in research and development sectors. Its collaboration with parties, such as with commonwealth nations or its creation of Our Future Health, (the UK's largest research program regarding global health and preparedness). Scientific research, clinical trials and epidemiology studies is a key aspect of the nation's engagement in tackling global health challenges.

Germany

Germany has collaborated with multiple organizations on the issue of global health preparedness, this includes the WHO, GAVI the Vaccine Alliance and the Global Funds to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The nation has also established relations with countries in the African Region, further focusing on universal healthcare and promoting global safety. With Germany's multilateral cooperation, they highly encourage international collaboration to achieve the issue of public health security.

France

France has released a new global health strategy. From 2023-2027, the nation will aim to promote universal healthcare and equality for all, whilst addressing challenges minority groups may be facing. France is committed to the possible adoption of an international pandemic response agreement, the pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (PPPR). As well as, the revision of the International Health Regulations (IHR). They are willing to apply both their multilateral and bilateral forces and cooperations to the full use and efficiently resolve this problem of global security.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

One relevant document is the International Health Regulations (IHR), which is a legally binding international instrument adopted by the World Health Assembly (the decision-making body of the World Health Organization, WHO). The IHR aims to prevent the spread of diseases internationally and provide a framework for cooperation between countries in responding to public health risks. It covers the reporting and management of public health events of international concern, including infectious disease outbreaks.

- International Health Regulations (IHR), 2005:
 - The IHR was incredibly effective, one of the main reasons for this was that the IHR is legally binding, in 196 countries, including all 194 states in the WHO,

Another Example of UN Involvement is the ICESCR, Overall, this resolution addresses general health, this resolution was drafted in 1954 and only came into effect in 1976.

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1966:
 - The ICESCR was a multilateral treaty adopted by the UNGA that worked towards granting every individual economic, social, and cultural rights.
 - Whilst not directly addressing pandemic prevention, as this resolution holds health standards to the highest degree, it would indirectly influence nations to combat pandemics as they are a major threat to health worldwide.

Finally, Resolution 2565, adopted by the Security Council in 2021, was mostly to call attention to problems surrounding COVID-19 and what needs to be addressed. However it did have a few solutions such as encouraging international cooperation for affordable and accessible vaccines for all,

- United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 2565, 2021:
 - This resolution directly addresses this issue of pandemic response via addressing the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Although the effectiveness wasn't as quantifiable, this resolution did help many nations understand the goals and solutions they should be working towards.

Possible Solutions

Creation of a Treaty

A treaty needs to be legally binding and must address all measures that member nations have to follow with lots of specificity. It is important that this treaty address public health concerns, economic concerns, and social concerns. This treaty can also include things such as an international database for recording cases of pandemic diseases to make international travel a lot easier.

Research, Development and Public Sector Initiatives

The creation of international funds or incentives to promote research and development for vaccines, antiviral drugs, and other medical interventions. Encouraging collaboration between governments, pharmaceutical companies, and research institutions could be a key component. Incentivizing companies to work with governments will ensure smoother creation of vaccines for the public.

Global Stockpiles of Medical Supplies

Advocate for the establishment of international stockpiles of critical medical supplies, including personal protective equipment (PPE), ventilators, and essential medicines. These stockpiles could be strategically located and easily accessible during emergencies. So creating a Global stockpile of common medical supplies will ensure that the world is prepared for the instance of a shortage.

Economic Support for Affected Countries

Financial mechanisms or relief funds to support countries severely impacted by pandemics. This could involve debt relief, economic stimulus packages, and support for rebuilding healthcare infrastructure. Member nations can preplan jobs that don't require

specialized skill to give to the unemployed during times of recession, this helps to improve the economic state of the country and improve preparedness in response to major pandemics.

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Useful Links

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- [CDC](#)
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- [China builds on 60-year record to strengthen medical ties with Africa](#)
- [BRICS and global health](#)
- [Our Future Health](#)
- [UK research and development roadmap](#)

- [Germany and WHO](#)
- [Germany-Africa relations for global health](#)
- [France new global health strategy](#)
- [France global health strategy \(different site\)](#)