



# WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION – RESEARCH REPORT II

## Strengthening global preparedness

### *Introduction to the Topic:*

Global preparedness has become a critical component of international security, public health, economic stability, and humanitarian resilience. Global preparedness refers to the collective capacity of states, international organizations and non-state actors to anticipate, prevent and recover from large scale crisis such as pandemics, natural disasters, armed conflicts cyber threats and climate related emergencies. The Covid 19 pandemic, escalating climate disasters and growing geopolitical tensions, has highlighted severe gaps in preparedness systems at national, regional, and global levels.

Preparedness is not limited to emergency response alone but includes early warning systems, risk assessment, infrastructure resilience, coordinated government, and sustainable investment in prevention. When preparedness mechanisms fail, crises rapidly escalate across borders, overwhelming healthcare systems, disrupting supply chains, increasing poverty, and increasing inequality. The consequences are disproportionately felt by developing countries and vulnerable populations, further widening global disparities.

Recent global crises have demonstrated that no nation can effectively manage large scale emergencies in isolation. Strengthening global preparedness therefore requires multilateral cooperation, transparent information sharing and coordinated action under the framework of the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

### *Background information*

Global preparedness refers to the proactive systems, resources, plans and coordination that countries, as well as the International Community, have in place to be able to anticipate and prevent, detect and respond quickly to health emergencies. With the COVID-19 Pandemic it became evident that there were certain critical gaps in how countries are providing global Health Security, such as disconnected Surveillance and disparate Access to Medical Treatments; and that many Countries have underfunded Health Systems. Therefore, to protect life, jobs and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from future pandemics, it is imperative that Countries improve their preparedness for pandemics.

Progress has been made under international frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030). According to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), 119 countries about 60% of UN Member States have established multi-hazard early warning systems, reflecting gradual global implementation. However, significant gaps persist, especially among Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries, where only around 43% have comprehensive early warning coverage (see Fig. 1 below).



Health preparedness levels also vary widely across regions. Global health security assessments show that while approximately 55% of countries demonstrate moderate to high readiness, nearly 8% of countries primarily in Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean remain at critically low levels of preparedness, making them particularly vulnerable to future pandemics and public health emergencies.

Economic inequality and governance challenges further exacerbate preparedness gaps. Many low-income countries lack sustainable financing mechanisms to invest in disaster risk reduction, resilient infrastructure, and emergency training. International initiatives like the Pandemic Fund have begun addressing these gaps: the fund has mobilized over US \$2.8 billion to strengthen prevention, detection, and response capacities in low and middle-income countries.

Collectively, these gaps demonstrate that global preparedness remains fragmented and uneven, posing serious threats to international stability, human security, and sustainable development. Without coordinated global action, future crises whether health-related, environmental, or geopolitical have a high risk escalating across borders. Strengthening preparedness through prevention, capacity-building, early warning systems, and equitable resource distribution is therefore essential to safeguarding global resilience and achieving the United Nations' long-term development and security goals.

## Graphs



## Past UN Actions

**Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction (2015-2030):** Adopted by the UN General Assembly (GA), this framework emphasizes disaster prevention, preparedness and resilience building to reduce loss of life and economic damage

**International health regulations (2005):** legally binding regulations coordinated by the World Health Organization to help countries prevent, detect and respond to public health emergencies of international concern. Its aim is to improve surveillance, reporting and response capacities



**United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR):** UNDRR supports countries in implementing disaster preparedness strategies, early warning systems, and resilience-building measures.

**Early Warnings for All Initiative:** Launched by the UN Secretary-General, this initiative aims to ensure that everyone on Earth is protected by early warning systems for hazardous events by 2027.

**Global Pandemic Preparedness Funding:** The Pandemic Fund has provided targeted funding to strengthen health systems and early detection capacities in vulnerable countries.

## ***Focus of the Debate***

Delegates should focus on enhancing international cooperation to strengthen preparedness across multiple domains, including health, climate, security, and technology. Delegates are encouraged to address mechanisms for equitable resource distribution, sustainable financing, capacity-building, and the role of technology in early warning and crisis management.

## ***Significant Parties***

- **India and China:** Biggest pharmaceutical and vaccine makers in the Global south. Key issues include export restrictions, production scale, and their participation in new treaty discussions. India is focused on building local capacity to produce pharmaceuticals and vaccines through “Atmanirbhar Bharat” (Self-Reliant India, was launched in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic by India’s Prime Minister aiming to make India economically independent and a strong global player).
- **Brazil and Indonesia:** Both countries have experienced large scale outbreaks of Zika and COVID-19 and face a unique challenge of balancing their own domestic priorities with the need for collaborative global action, as there are significant issues regarding sovereignty and the right to share pathogens.
- **Sweden and Germany:** Both countries are often seen as examples of countries that have strong public health agencies and social trust, which are both critical to their national preparedness.
- **African Agency:** South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal: have prioritized health system strengthening and local vaccine manufacturing
- **New Zealand, Australia, and Iceland:** recognized for “exclusion and elimination” strategies that resulted in some of the lowest excess mortality rates.

## ***Glossary and Key Terms:***

**Early warning systems:** mechanism designed to issue alerts about impending hazards to enable lifesaving action

**Global preparedness:** the ability of the international community to anticipate, prevent, respond to and recover from large scale crisis

**International health regulations:** a legally binding World Health Organization framework aimed at strengthening global health security.



**Multi hazard early warning systems:** systems that address multiple kinds of hazards such as weather, climate, health and technological

**Resilience:** the capacity of systems, communities and institutions to withstand and recover from crises

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