

# VIRTUAL COFFEE SESSIONS

## SESSION 3

### PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE (PPR)

#### KEY LESSONS LEARNT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COVID-19 STRATEGIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN AFRICAN CONSTITUENCIES

- **Early implementation of Public Health and Safety Measures (PHSM)** by many governments (lockdowns measures, border screenings, international travel restrictions and other key PHSM);
- **Strong government commitment** at the highest level, with the President or Prime Minister heading the multisectoral response task force, facilitated quick and decisive actions;
- **The “whole-of-government and whole-of-society”** approach to the COVID-19 pandemic response with the involvement of all key sectors is fundamental;
- **Good coordination and collaboration** between the various government departments supported by WHO deployed experts and other partners in most countries;
- **Planning and decision-making guided** by locally available data and proven global best practices;
- **Partnerships** through the UN Supply Platform to procure supplies directly from manufacturers in a competitive environment and high demand coupled with solidarity flights enabled countries to have critical supplies for testing, management of cases and reduction of infection especially in health facilities;
- **Constant dialogue with communities** to building confidence alleviate fears, panic and increase trust in the healthcare system in continuous provision of needed essential health services;
- **Combatting misinformation** through effective infodemic management by distilling the right information and engaging to those in need increases demand and adherence to life-saving cost-effective interventions such as vaccination; and
- **Increased funding** especially domestic funding is the cornerstone for building resilient systems that can withstand shocks.

#### CHALLENGES FOR COUNTRIES TO IMPLEMENT PPR MEASURES

- 1 Surveillance and disease detection (Preparedness/Readiness)**  
Identified weaknesses (Weak public health infrastructure, lack of sufficiently trained disease detectives (epidemiologists, Virologists, Data Officers and other disciplines).
- 2 Weaknesses in Response Capacity**
  - Inconsistent and often inadequate supply of diagnostics, treatment and prevention commodities.
  - Coordination of disease outbreaks (National Public Health Institutions and Emergency Operations)
  - Inadequate and poorly resourced health workers (especially frontline workers)
- 3 Low investment in the production of diagnostics, vaccines and other medical counter measures: Example:**
  - Imports more than 80 per cent of its medicine and other medical products.
  - Produces 1% of its human vaccine needs (imported 99% of its vaccine)

#### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Plan for the problems we know of (Preparedness)**
  - Improve capacities in disease surveillance, preparedness and response (national, regional and continental)
  - Invest in systems, and human capacity, in areas such as emergency operation centres, improved labs and frontline health facilities, and on and interoperable data systems.
  - Initiate joint action plans that address health security holistically, no matter how small or big the health event is likely to be.
- 2 Be ready to respond when outbreaks occur (Response)**
  - Strengthen coordination across all sectors with adequately trained and properly resourced response teams
  - Improve the supply management systems to ensure commodities are available at the very time of need
  - Explore innovative ways to fund outbreak response such as risk transfers and insurance for epidemics
- 3 Invest in the future (Investments for future challenges)**
  - Need for Public/Private partnerships to invest in research and production of vaccines, therapeutics and test kits, etc.
  - Reduce our reliance on external help, aim to reach about 60% production of needs in 10-20 years
  - Invest in infrastructure and human capacity for disease modelling, epidemic forecasts and forward planning
  - Strengthening advocacy for investment in health security ( Making the case for investment in health security by demonstrating the effect of outbreaks, epidemics on the economy)
- 4 THE GLOBAL FUND can help countries to:**
  - **Invest in Health Systems Strengthening (HSS)** that match national government investment in HSS. A well-functioning health system will contribute to better HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB control;
  - **Consider PPR as a mechanism to support HSS** and not be viewed in silos in the next Global Fund Strategy
  - **Shift from a reactive mindset to a pro-active one.** The investment in HSS must be targeted to go beyond core diseases of interest but help African countries to better prepare and conduct early responses when outbreaks occur;
  - **To further invest in robust surveillance systems,** real-time digital data and detection capacity, front-line capacity for detection and rapid response to epidemics, integration of community systems for detection and response, emergency supply chain systems and strengthened laboratory systems and diagnostics capacity;
  - **Support local manufacturing** of products which has been also seen as way of managing risks;and
  - **Mutually reinforce elements between people-centered integrated systems,** pandemic preparedness and response, community engagement, health equity, gender and human rights.



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