

February was a lost month of opportunity to contain the outbreak, even as the evidence of infections spreading globally was apparent.

For the Panel it is also clear that timing mattered — for a few countries, early recognition of the COVID-19 threat and quick responses kept the epidemic small. But even countries that acted later have been able to gain and maintain success with adaptable responses that are coordinated, multisectoral and science-based.

Countries that devalued science failed to build trust in their response and pursued inconsistent strategies that left them lagging behind the epidemic and with high infection and death rates.

