



## 1. Elevate leadership to prepare for and respond to global health threats to the highest levels to ensure just, accountable and multisectoral action

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the lack of high-level political leadership in coordinated global action against the pandemic, with resultant failures in securing agreement between governments in support of common goals and alignment of efforts to tackle health, social and economic challenges. As a result, coherent global strategic directions in pandemic response have not been set and linked to international agencies and regional institutions. Nor have the private sector and civil society organizations been able to contribute to strategic direction setting in an effective way.

The organic evolution of the international health system over recent decades in order to address particular health problems has resulted in pockets of major progress but also created inefficiencies resulting from unclear roles and responsibilities and an inability to leverage effectively the comparative advantages of different actors. Global health crises have whole-of-system impacts and require coordinated leadership from WHO, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and the United Nations Secretary-General. Similar coordination is required regionally. At country level where there is a United Nations presence the Resident Coordinator system provides United Nations system coordination in support of countries.

The international system for pandemic preparedness and response requires fundamental transformation, catalyzed by political leadership at the highest level. That transformation needs to deliver synergies between international, regional and national organizations, increased pandemic preparedness and response capacities at all levels, and effective monitoring and compliance systems.

The Panel is convinced that a Global Health Threats Council at the most senior level is vital to success in the future. The pandemic shows such a body is long overdue. It would help secure high-level political leadership and ensure attention to pandemic prevention, preparedness and response is sustained over time in the service of a vision of a world without pandemics. The Council should be an inclusive and legitimate voice of authority with the ability to utilise both accountability mechanisms and provide access to financing to ensure preparedness as well as response at the national, regional and global levels.

Any transformation of the international system will require more robust international governance for pandemic preparedness and response. International legal instruments should support that goal. The Panel believes that a Framework Convention would be an opportunity to address gaps in the international response, clarify responsibilities between States and international organizations, and establish and