

Terms of reference for the Global Health Threats Council

Purpose:

The role of the Global Health Threats Council (the Council) will be to ensure that high level political leadership and attention to pandemic prevention, preparedness and response are sustained over time in the service of a vision of *a world without pandemics*. The council will 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.

Background:

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated insufficient high-level political leadership; engagement across health, social and economic sectors; and agreement between governments. This has resulted in the failure to set coherent global strategic directions in pandemic response and link them 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.

A key finding of the Panel is that accountability for pandemic preparedness and response has been lacking across the system. National governments are the primary duty-bearer in pandemic response, and the lack of accountability has been accompanied by a failure to learn from mistakes and take up the opportunity for learning between countries.

The Independent Panel on Pandemic Preparedness and Response concluded that a transformation of the international system for pandemic preparedness and response is needed, catalysed by political leadership at the highest level.

The commitment of Heads of State and Government to a transform of the international system for pandemic preparedness and response must go together with their commitment to lead strong and effective national, regional and global implementation. This within the framework of continued and enhanced implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The international system is the sum of national action and the connective tissue of regional and global learning, cooperation and support for filling gaps. Confidence in the collective determination to make a safer and healthier world is the force that can conquer the threat pandemics pose to humanity's future.