



3. Invest in preparedness now to create fully functional capacities at the national, regional and global level

Pandemic preparedness has received insufficient political priority. It has been largely confined to the health sector. The extent of pandemic risk has not been appreciated in financial decision-making or in whole-of-government or organizational priority-setting at national, regional or global levels.

An immediate opportunity to integrate pandemic risk awareness and pandemic preparedness with economic development would be to incorporate relevant pandemic considerations into existing instruments used by the IMF and World Bank.

Multisectoral coordination of preparedness has been lacking. While the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction includes pandemic risk in its purview, disaster risk reduction capacity-building has largely been separated from health-sector pandemic preparedness efforts.

One consequence of the lack of priority given to pandemic preparedness is a financing gap to support national preparedness planning and capacity-building and global support functions. National pandemic response plans have often not been strategic and have lacked realistic financial mobilization plans.

The funding gap for preparedness exists globally and in countries at all income brackets. While low- and middle-income countries may need international support to supplement their domestic resources for pandemic preparedness, high-income countries can meet all the required costs from domestic resources.

Preparedness assessments were not robust, and in practice they failed to predict actual performance in COVID-19 responses. The use of simulation exercises was at best patchy and not systematically followed up with remedial action. Animal and environmental health systems were largely not integrated with human health protection systems. Explicit One Health planning was not adopted at the top governance level nationally, regionally or globally.

There was a lack of surge plans, rapidly deployable human resources, stockpiles, and pre-positioning of essential supplies.

A new pathogen with pandemic potential could emerge at any time. **These gaps in preparedness need urgent rectification.** While many governments and regional and international organizations are focused on the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, they may find it challenging to pay attention to the measures needed to prepare better for future outbreaks. Those future outbreaks may also be of very different pathogens with different