PMAC PRINCE MAHIDOL AWARD CONFERENCE 2021

PL1

WHAT HAS THE WORLD LEARNED FROM COVID-19?

| BACKGROUND

In one of the first speeches after his appointment, Tedros Ghebreyesus, the WHO Director-General, noted that 'in an interconnected world, we are only as strong as our weakest link.' No country is safe if disease transmission is active in some parts of the world. COVID-19 hit the wealthiest countries hard, with effects far beyond health, while some middle- and lower middle-income countries managed to get their situations under control. In addition to the levels of pandemic preparedness, the disparities reflect the characteristics of the various health systems, such as emphasis on primary health care, extent of public funding for health care, public-private mix in healthcare delivery and adequacy of human resources in health. COVID-19 is confirming the importance of community engagement and ownership, and informed and community-supported self-directed health and hygiene behaviours of each individual in controlling the pandemic. 'Solidarity' has become a symbol of the COVID-19 response – from the global level and down to the grassroots. One remarkable achievement has been demonstrated in healthcare facilities. To save lives when the flood of patients was overwhelming hospitals and ICUs, national and international aid teams were sent – either voluntarily or through their organizations -- to create and maintain surge capacity.

Now that some countries have successfully managed to bring the first wave of COVID-19 under control, it is time to take an early look back and consider what could have been done differently to improve outcomes in all countries. In advance of COVID-19, a series of infectious threats --SARS, highly pathogenic avian influenza virus infection, MERS, and the first pandemic of the century, 2009 H1N1 influenza – had already established a pattern of potential but imminent pandemic emergence, and adoption of IHR(2005) by all Member States should have pushed development of core capacities for detection, reporting, and mitigation to the top of the priority list for national and international leaders and their communities. However, countries have often failed to deliver on this mandate due to other pressing priorities and, notably, a lack of financial commitment: response overrides preparedness. How did these lapses affect countries' readiness for and response to COVID-19?

Webinar sessions under sub-theme 1 have addressed lessons learned so far in key areas such as governance, communication, socio-economic impact and readiness/preparedness of countries. Chairs of each webinars will discuss about the outcomes or their sessions and build together a framework to better manage future pandemics. The analytical framework will comprise a list of lessons learned and key actionable recommendations, translating collective experience into action.

| OBJECTIVES



Moderator / Panelist

Ilona Kickbusch

Chair of the International Advisory Board

Global Health Centre, the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies
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rofessor Ilona Kickbusch is the Founder and Chair of the Global Health Centre at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva.
Professor Kickbusch key interests relate to the political determinants of health, health in all policies and global health. She is the founder of the Global Health Centre at the Graduate Institute, Geneva. She advises countries and organizations on their global health strategies and trains health specialists and diplomats in global health diplomacy.
She is a member of the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board and is co-chair of UHC 2030. She acts as Council Chair to the World Health Summit in Berlin. She has been involved in German G7 and G20 activities relating to global health and the global health initiatives of the German EU presidency in 2020. She chaired the international advisory board for the development of the German global health strategy. She publishes widely and serves on various commissions and boards. She initiated the @wgh300 list of women leaders in global health. She is program chair of the leaders in health network SCIANA. She is co-chair of a Lancet FT Commission on “Governing health futures 2030: growing up in a digital world.” She continues to advise the World Health Organization.
Professor Kickbusch has had a distinguished career with the World Health Organization. She was key instigator of the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion and WHOs Healthy Cities Network and has remained a leader in this field. She was the director of the Global Health Division at Yale University School of Public Health and responsible for the first major Fulbright Programme on global health. She has published widely and received many prizes and recognitions.
She has been awarded the Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany (Bundesverdienstkreuz) in recognition of her "invaluable contributions to innovation in governance for global health and global health diplomacy".