

New health board aims to break 'cycle of panic and neglect' on pandemics

A group of international experts has been tasked with helping the planet to better prepare for outbreaks, pandemics and other emergencies that have an impact on health.

The Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (GPMB) brings together political leaders, heads of United Nations agencies and health experts to strengthen global health security through stringent independent monitoring and regular reporting. It was launched on Thursday in Geneva by the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) and [the World Bank Group](#).

Dr. Jim Yong, World Bank Group president, said the Board's work will help save lives and prevent economic losses.

"For too long, we have allowed a cycle of panic and neglect when it comes to pandemics: we ramp up efforts when there's a serious threat, then quickly forget about them when the threat subsides," Dr. Kim said in [a press release](#) announcing the initiative.

"With the GPMB, we're taking a large step towards breaking that cycle."

The Board will monitor emergency preparedness across national governments, UN agencies, civil society and the private sector.

It will report annually on whether financing is adequate, as well as progress on relevant research and development; and the strength of health crisis-preparedness at the global, regional and national levels.

The Board will be co-chaired by Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, a former Prime Minister of Norway who also served as WHO Director-General from 1998-2003, and Mr Elhadj As Sy, Secretary General of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Dr. Brundtland said the current Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo—a reminder of the deadly West African outbreak four years ago—shows that preparation for such crises "has never been clearer."

She added that the Board "will hold all actors, from private and public sectors, accountable for building essential public health capacities, generating sustainable financing and ensuring that necessary research and development is conducted."