



Plenary 6 Summary

The World Bank estimates that an influenza pandemic could cost the global economy between \$800 billion and \$2 trillion. Even more worrisome is the disease's inequitable impact, with more than 95 percent of deaths projected to occur in the poorest nations of the world. The ethical imperative to prepare for such a disaster is clear, but the interconnectedness of today's world makes halting the rapid spread of infection extremely difficult. Such a widespread threat necessitates that all nations work together to devise global prevention and preparedness plans.

Our priorities must also address the ongoing need for stronger and more integrated health systems. Instead of creating new structures designed only to combat this significant threat, we should build on and improve existing infrastructure, linking and integrating efforts to increase their effectiveness. We must also train more health workers and ensure that hospitals and clinics are equipped with basic supplies such as masks, gloves, swabs, and syringes, as well as technology that is appropriate to each local environment. In addition, greater integration between animal and human health surveillance systems would increase our chances of identifying disease patterns early on and

preventing outbreaks. This win-win solution will also foster confidence at the local level, an invaluable asset during the chaos of a pandemic.

The priorities of the global community should also focus on our most effective, safest, and least expensive tool at hand—the vaccine. While vaccination will be expensive, financing these efforts must be understood in the context of the potential cost of un-preparedness. Instead of creating new vertical funding systems, we should take advantage of existing

channels. As pandemic influenza presents a global threat, the participation of international financing institutions in formulating prevention and preparedness strategies is crucial. Public-private partnerships can also help to ensure that an equitable solution is reached by supporting tiered pricing.

The *business as usual* paradigm will simply not suffice. GlaxoSmithKline set an example by donating 50 million vaccine doses to the WHO's new global stockpile, which Margaret Chan announced in her Summit address. As Dr. Chan noted, now is the best time to prepare for a pandemic. While the economic, personal,

and social costs of an outbreak could be catastrophic, existing technology and global collaboration provide us with an unprecedented opportunity to achieve a victory for prevention. ↻

For the first time in history, the world has been watching the conditions that may start an influenza pandemic unfold in real-time. Nature has given us an unprecedented warning, and we have been given more time to prepare than anyone dare hope.

- Margaret Chan

Moderator:

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Margaret Chan
Director-General
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Lord Nigel Crisp
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For further information, please visit: www.pacifichealthsummit.org. Summit photos by Mark Weeks.