



LETTERS

POST-EBOLA REFORMS

Post-Ebola reforms deserve support

Margaret F C Chan *medical doctor and director general*

World Health Organization, CH-1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland

We agree with Moon and colleagues¹—most of the 11 000 Ebola deaths in west Africa could have been prevented had the world been much better prepared. Those three countries had broken health systems, rudimentary capacities for research and logistics, and no early warning systems. People put their trust in traditional healers. Clinicians had unsafe treatment centres, no vaccines or treatments, and too little personal protective equipment. We have a long way to go.

As their report concludes, “substantial reforms are under way and deserve support.” The World Health Organization’s new emergencies programme, for example, has a central coordinating role, using procedures established during humanitarian crises to tackle disease outbreaks and helping to strengthen early warning and rapid detection systems.

A formal process led by WHO for vetting emergency medical teams assures a quality controlled health workforce with surge capacity. All member states are prioritising peer reviewed assessments of their core capacities to implement the International Health Regulations.

WHO’s Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework has secured access to around 350 million doses of vaccine to prepare for the next pandemic and has enabled investment of more than

\$110m (£88m; €104m) to build surveillance, laboratory, regulatory, and other capacities in developing countries.

In addition, the WHO blueprint for research and development has been applied to expedite the development of new medical products for Zika virus disease. The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, which draws on the blueprint and the WHO list of priority pathogens, holds great promise for developing vaccines ahead of epidemics.

We stand at a critical moment. The international community has an opportunity to build on lessons learnt during Ebola and other recent outbreaks, to ensure a cohesive, adequately funded approach to global health security, and to make the world permanently safer. Let us seize that opportunity.

Competing interests: None declared.

Full response at: <http://www.bmj.com/content/356/bmj.j280/rr-2>.

1 Moon S, Leigh J, Woskie L. Post-Ebola reforms: ample analysis, inadequate action. *BMJ* 2017;356:j280. doi:10.1136/bmj.j28028115316

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