

2007 GHSI Ministerial Meeting

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



COMMUNIQUÉ EIGHTH MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY INITIATIVE Washington, D.C. USA - November 2, 2007

We, Ministers/Secretaries/Commissioner of Health from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union, concluded our Eighth Ministerial Meeting of the Global Health Security Initiative (GHSI) in Washington, DC today.

1. We created this initiative in November 2001 as an informal partnership to strengthen public health preparedness and response globally to the threat of international chemical, biological and radio-nuclear terrorism. Since 2002, in conjunction with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other appropriate international organizations, we also dealt with certain aspects of the public health threat posed by pandemic influenza. This Initiative is supported by the Global Health Security Action Group (GHSAG), a network of senior officials which discusses key health security policies with international dimensions. Following the Ministerial meeting, we are issuing this statement to renew our commitments to this vital Initiative.
2. International cooperation remains essential to the improvement of the health security of our citizens. This Ministerial Meeting allowed us to review progress to date, to reflect on how to focus or re-align activities in the future and to consider commitments for the next twelve months.
3. Both individually and collectively, we have made significant progress to enhance our respective capacities. This includes the following:
 - the establishment of an active network of trusted contacts within Health Ministries;
 - the development of a forum to encourage international health security action;
 - the creation of a secure website and an operational communication system utilizing videoconferencing to bring together senior officials on short notice;
 - the establishment of a network of GHSI member risk communications specialists to develop and integrate effective risk communications strategies for critical GHSI priorities;
 - the enhancement and quality assurance of analytical work in high-safety laboratories;

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- the successful participation in international exercises and the sharing of relevant lessons;
 - the significant contribution to the current global level of knowledge of, and preparedness for, a pandemic influenza outbreak; and
 - the significant progress on reducing the threat of smallpox as a result of intensive work, including a unique worldwide exercise, and the support given to the WHO Secretariat, particularly in the creation of an international stockpile of smallpox vaccine and in the field of planning for the potential need for vaccination.
4. Today, we are re-committing ourselves to the GHSI and re-affirming our resolve to strengthen global health security and to protect the health and safety of our respective populations. We will continue to take concerted and concrete actions, and to enhance our respective capacities to prepare for and to deal with the threat of international biological, chemical and radio-nuclear terrorism.
 5. We reinforced the importance of sharing influenza viruses in a fast and transparent manner, consistent with the International Health Regulations (2005). Regarding the fight against influenza worldwide, we stressed the key role of the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network (GISN). We are concerned about the current geographic coverage issues and we are committed to working with others to resolve these questions. We encourage all WHO Member States to work together to strengthen the GISN.
 6. Today, we reviewed risks and threats that are currently a priority to our initiative. We also discussed and agreed on a strategy which serves the objectives to maintain strong technical cooperation on the risks and threats identified in our common assessment:
 - to strengthen its role as a policy forum by identifying emerging issues and coordinating policy development processes to address chemical, biological and radio-nuclear threats;
 - to strengthen risk communications strategies within and among members;
 - to strengthen our partnership as a forum for discussing global health security and public health issues of common concern, such as pandemic influenza;
 - to address CBRN threats through research and development for novel medical countermeasures, and to explore options for expanded access to needed countermeasures; and
 - to ensure that we have a responsive and efficient network to address priority issues.

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7. We thanked the chairs and members of the GHSAG and the chair and members of all working groups for the work accomplished over the last six years. Without their dedication in the field of global health security, the accomplishments listed above would not have been possible. We ask the GHSAG to continue their efforts in bringing forward strategic issues for our consideration and deliberation.
8. We welcomed the offer of the Commissioner for Health of the European Commission to host our next Ministerial Meeting.

The statement was endorsed by the following Health Ministers, Secretaries and senior officials

- The Honourable Roselyne Bachelot-Narquin, Ministre de la santé, de la jeunesse et des sports, France
- The Honourable Tony Clement, M.P., Minister of Health, Canada
- Mr. Markos Kyprianou, Commissioner for Health, European Commission
- The Honourable Michael O. Leavitt, Secretary of Health and Human Services, United States
- The Honourable Kenta Matsunami, Parliamentary Secretary of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan
- The Right Honourable Dawn Primarolo, M.P., Minister of State for Public Health, United Kingdom
- The Honourable Ulla Schmidt, MdB, Minister of Health, Germany.
- Dr. Donato Greco, for the Honourable Livia Turco, Minister of Health Italy
- Dr. Pablo Kuri-Morales, for the Honourable José Ángel Córdoba Villalobos, M.D., Minister of Health, Mexico