



XI GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY INITIATIVE MEXICO CITY 2010



GHSI Ministerial Meeting 2-3 December 2010 Mexico City, Mexico

Ministerial Communiqué

We, Ministers/Secretaries/Commissioner from Mexico, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, United States and the European Commission, gathered today in Mexico. The mandate of the Global Health Security Initiative (GHSI) is to enhance our respective capacities to prepare for and respond to health threats posed by chemical, biological and radio-nuclear (CBRN) terrorism and pandemic influenza, and to undertake concerted action to strengthen health security globally. Our discussions today served to advance our work in this regard.

Remaining Vigilant to New and Persistent Health Threats and Risks

Given the global health security concerns that remain a priority for our governments and organizations, we remain committed to our aim of maintaining and strengthening the preparedness of the health sector.

We recognize that collective preparedness depends upon a sound understanding of threats and risks and the capability to respond to them. The GHSI has taken important steps in 2010 to advance risk assessment, to build linkages with the security and intelligence sectors, and to link our health preparedness to GHSI's assessment of risks. These efforts will continue to be critical in the future.

We discussed how the uncertainty inherent in public health crises should be taken into account in any government communications with the public. We also recognized the critical importance of timely information sharing among our governments, especially as situations rapidly develop. This information sharing has been greatly facilitated by our work through GHSI.

Strengthening Future Preparedness by Building on Experiences

The response to Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 was a key focus of our joint efforts through GHSI. As the pandemic progressed, our governments and organizations shared knowledge and best practices in order to inform national decision-making.

We reviewed lessons learned with respect to the H1N1 pandemic which include the following:

- Our respective responses benefited from our joint preparedness efforts, demonstrating the importance of building on existing national systems, including the timely sharing of surveillance information, anti-viral and vaccine distribution and monitoring of vaccine uptake and adverse events.
- Opportunities exist for improvement with respect to these systems, and that additional work is required to further our response capabilities, particularly related to distribution and dispensing of medicines and vaccines, including international deployment.
- Evidence-based public health policies informed key decisions. For instance, the rapid availability of epidemiological information allowed us to identify those at highest risk from H1N1 infection to guide antiviral drug use.

Overall, these lessons highlight that our work in sharing planning assumptions and preparedness strategies improved our respective and collective responses. We affirm our commitment to apply these lessons to address future threats.

In addition, we affirmed that the WHO's leadership was and remains critical in managing a coordinated and effective global health response.

Future Priorities

Consistent with our strategic approach, and taking into consideration the lessons learned from the H1N1 pandemic, we emphasize the importance of efforts to strengthen preparedness including in the following areas:

- *Continued Progress in Assessing Threats and Risks:* The progress made in 2010 in developing a common methodology for assessing threats and risks will be further built upon, applied to a wider range of potential hazards, and will be used to inform future priority-setting within GHSI.

- *Laboratory Capacity*: Laboratory preparedness for the diagnosis of biological threats, and in particular diagnostic quality assurance for highly pathogenic agents, is an ongoing priority for GHSI. Future efforts will emphasize diagnostic approaches for unknown pathogens, new and emerging technologies, global capacity-building and strengthened cooperation among laboratories in both the chemical and radio-nuclear sectors.
- *Emergency Communications Exercises*: A sustained capacity to be able to communicate quickly during a public health crisis is a critical component of our partnership. We are committed to further exploring new and innovative ways to reinforce our joint readiness.
- *Steps toward an Early Alerting and Reporting Platform*: We have produced a common platform for tracking public information sources, as well as validation by analysts to ensure quality of results. We will jointly pursue a subsequent phase of this project, which would include early implementation and identification of next steps.
- *Medical Countermeasures*: Through our collaborative efforts we will implement best practices and address challenges with respect to research and development, stockpiling and deployment, both nationally and internationally, of vaccines and other countermeasures.
- *Other Public Health Measures including Decontamination*: Our efforts in 2011 will promote information-sharing and best practices in the external decontamination of people following a CBRN event, with an emphasis on technical capacity-building.
- *International Health Regulations (IHR)*: We will continue to work with the WHO to advance opportunities for strengthening health security in the context of IHR implementation, through capacity-building initiatives.

We welcomed the proposal of France to host the next Ministerial Meeting in 2011.

This statement was endorsed by the following Ministers, Secretaries and Commissioner of Health:

The Honourable Dr. José Ángel Córdova Villalobos, Secretary of Health, Mexico
The Honourable Simon Burns, MP, Minister of State for Health, United Kingdom
The Honourable Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services,
United States of America
The Honourable Dr. Mitsunori Okamoto, Parliamentary Secretary of Health,
Labour, and Welfare, Japan
Ms. Jane Billings, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, on behalf of the Honourable
Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health, Canada
Mr. John F. Ryan, Head, Health Threats Unit, on behalf of Mr. John Dalli,
Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, European Commission
Professor Didier Houssin, Director General of Health, on behalf of the
Honourable Xavier Bertrand, Minister of Labour, Employment and Health,
France
Ms. Karin Knufmann-Happe, Director General, Prevention, Health Protection,
Disease Control and Biomedicine, on behalf of the Honourable Dr. Philipp
Rösler, Minister of Health, Germany
Dr. Giuseppe Ruocco, Director General for International Relations, on behalf of
the Honourable Prof. Ferruccio Fazio, Minister of Health, Italy