

Global Health Events

October 2008 – June 2009

October 2008

21st

The new Global Health programme of the Graduate Institute, directed by Ilona Kickbusch, organized the 2nd symposium on Global Health Diplomacy entitled “Negotiating Health in the 21st century – Analysing the Power shift in Global Health at National and Global Level.” The symposium set out to consider the role of the emerging economies, regional groupings and foreign policy actors in global health. In her opening speech, the Director General of the World Health Organization Dr. Margaret Chan made a forceful plea to address the health of the poorest through sustainable primary health care, particularly in the face of the global economic crisis.

December 2008

National Intelligence Council published the *Strategic Implications of Global Health* as requested by the Undersecretary of State for Democratization and Global Affairs to conduct an intelligence assessment on linkages between U.S. national interests and security and health. It builds upon a 2000 National Intelligence Estimate *The Global Infectious Disease Threat and its Implications for the United States*. This study expands upon the 2000 report by encompassing all global health issues, which may or may not represent direct threats, and focuses more on the strategic impact of global health rather than examining disease pathologies.

15th

A preliminary report entitled *The U.S. Commitment to Global Health: Recommendations for the New Administration* was issued by the Institute of Medicine. The report recommends that the new administration highlight health as a pillar of U.S. foreign policy and provides specific recommendations as to how the incoming leadership can demonstrate its commitment to global health.

January 2009

21st

The WHO released an updated timeline of major events for avian influenza H5N1, for both human and animal populations. Since November 2008, there have been a series of H5N1 outbreaks across Southeast Asia, recurring outbreaks in Bangladesh and India, and in China and India.

February 2009

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation commissioned a series of surveys of R&D investment for specific neglected diseases by the George Institute for International Health. An article in *PLoS Medicine*

summarizes key data and findings of the G-FINDER survey, which aimed to provide standardized and comprehensive data on R&D investments to enable comparative analyses for disease-specific R&D funding. In 2007, HIV/AIDS represented 42.3 percent of total funding followed by malaria and tuberculosis at 18.3 and 16.03 percent respectively; cumulatively the three diseases captured over 75 percent of total R&D funding (total in 2007 was \$2.5 billion).

- 16th The Democratic Republic of the Congo's Ministry of Health declared the end of an Ebola epidemic that totaled 32 cases and 15 deaths associated with Ebola. The last person to have been infected by the Ebola virus died on January 1, 2009.
- 18th The WHO Epidemic and Pandemic Alert and Response (EPR) provided an update on the number of confirmed human cases of avian influenza (H5N1). In 2008, the cumulative number of cases and deaths were 44 and 33 respectively; as of February 18, 2009, the WHO reported 13 human cases and 4 deaths. Since 2003, the cumulative total of human cases and deaths is 408 and 254 respectively.
- 21st An article in a *Lancet* series on trade and health exams trade, TRIPS (trade-related intellectual property rights), and pharmaceuticals. The paper reviews possible options for the global health community to successfully negotiate under TRIPS and TRIPS-plus (i.e. more stringent restrictions as part of bilateral trade agreements). One conclusion offered is that developing countries have not used existing flexibilities within TRIPS (e.g., compulsory licenses and parallel imports) to overcome patent barriers. One implementation barrier for TRIPS is a fear of trade sanctions or economic repercussions from development countries.

March 2009

- 10th Chatham House (London) formally launched its Centre on Global Health Security with the announcement that Dr. David Heymann will head the Centre. Dr Heymann was formerly Assistant Director-General, Health Security and Environment, at the World Health Organization. The announcement was made at the conference on "Rethinking Global Health: Political and Practical Challenges from Foreign and Security Policy."

April 2009

- 21st The Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) launched the CSIS Commission on Smart Global Health Policy. The Commission will develop actionable recommendations for a long-term, strategic U.S. approach to global health, culminating in a Commission report to be released in early 2010. The CSIS Global

Health Policy Center, directed by J. Stephen Morrison, was made possible by a three-year grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

23rd A \$225 million partnership launched in April 2009 aims to provide affordable malaria drugs to those in-need, in particular those in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. The Affordable Medicines Facility for Malaria will be managed by the Global Fund and involves a partnership between private and public institutions. Only eleven countries (Benin, Cambodia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda) will be provided these drugs. Global expansion will depend on the two-year project performance.

27th The WHO Emergency Committee reviewed available data on the H1N1 influenza outbreak and advised the WHO Director-General. Dr. Chan raised the pandemic alert level from phase 3 to phase 4, indicating a sustained transmission.

May 2009

11th President Obama announces his fully FY2010 budget which includes \$8.6 billion for global health. This is the part of the Obama Administration's Global Health Initiative that will provide \$63 billion in global health spending over six years (FY2009-2014). Global health advocates criticized the FY2010 budget numbers for not providing enough to reach the goals of PEPFAR and other global health commitments.

26th The 62nd World Health Assembly closed on Friday with the adoption of global health resolutions focused upon primary health care, control of drug-resistant TB, and H1N1 preparedness.

29th Three H1N1 virus samples were released by the WHO to vaccine manufacturers for use in development of an H1N1 vaccine. WHO Assistant Director-General Keiji Fukuda stated that manufacturers should be able to produce an H1N1 vaccine by early July, while CDC's Interim Deputy Director for Science and Public Health Program Anne Schuchat stated that an H1N1 vaccine may be available by October.

June 2009

3rd With the continued spread of H1N1 across multiple countries, the WHO indicated that it is seriously considering elevating the pandemic alert status to phase 6 (a full-blown pandemic). As of Wednesday, the WHO reported 19,273 cases of H1N1 with 117 deaths. This has brought attention to the pandemic alert system and how to reconcile highly transmissible yet low severity viruses.

12th The WHO elevated the pandemic alert level for H1N1 (swine flu) influenza from phase 5 to phase 6, due to sustained transmission in multiple continents. As of June 11, the WHO reported 28,774 confirmed cases with 144 deaths in 74 countries. Dr. Chan, WHO Director-General, indicated that a vaccine would likely not be available before fall 2009, and initially in small quantities.

Sources: World Health Organization, Reuters, Henry L. Stimson Center, *PLoS Medicine*, *The Lancet*, National Intelligence Council, Global Forum on Health Research, Bulletin of the WHO, *Wall Street Journal*, UNITAID, Global Fund Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, *IRIN*, Kaiser Network, *New York Times*