



Zero-Draft of Pandemic Treaty

Prelims: Zero-Draft of Pandemic Treaty, WHO, Covid-19, Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing system, IHR.

Mains: Challenges Posing Risk to the Health Sector.

Why in News?

Recently, the [World Health Organization's \(WHO\)](#) has published a '**Zero-Draft**' of the **Pandemic Treaty**, aiming to bring in Global and National-Level **Pandemic Preparedness**.

- The treaty aims to **address the challenges posed by pandemics and other global health emergencies**.
- The zero-draft of the pandemic treaty was established based on recognising the catastrophic failure of the international community in showing solidarity and equity in response to the [Covid-19 Pandemic](#).

What are the Principal Components of the Draft?

- **Global Cooperation:**
 - It calls for **increased global coordination and cooperation** in the preparation for and response to pandemics and **other global health emergencies**.
- **Strengthening of Health Systems:**
 - It emphasizes the **need to strengthen health systems in all countries**, particularly in **low- and middle-income countries**, to ensure they are better prepared to respond to pandemics and other global health emergencies.
- **Investment in Research and Development:**
 - It calls for **improved access to essential health technologies**, such as [vaccines](#), diagnostics, and treatments, during pandemics and other global health emergencies.
 - It calls for **increased investment in research and development** of health technologies, particularly for diseases that pose a significant threat to global health.
- **Transparency in Sharing of Information:**
 - It calls for **increased transparency and sharing of information about pandemics** and other global health emergencies, including data on the spread of diseases and the effectiveness of interventions.
- **Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing System:**
 - The constitution of a PABS has been constituted under the WHO, making Genomic sequences of all pathogens with pandemic potential to **be shared on an "equal footing" in the system**.
 - The PABS system is an important tool for ensuring the responsible and equitable use of pathogens and their genetic resources in the research and development **of new medicines and vaccines**, while also recognizing the rights and interests of the countries and communities that provide these resources.
- **Addressing Gender Disparities:**

- In addressing gender disparities in the healthcare workforce, the draft aims to **“ensure meaningful representation**, engagement, participation and empowerment of all health and care workers” by stressing equal pay and addressing barriers specific to women in taking leadership roles.

What is the Existing Framework for Global Health Cooperation?

- The [International Health Regulations](#) (IHR), is an instrument of international law that is **legally-binding on 196 countries** including India.
- It aims for international collaboration to prevent, protect against, control, and provide a **public health response to the international spread of disease**.
 - It provides an overarching legal framework that defines countries’ rights and obligations in handling public health events and emergencies that have the potential to cross borders.
- IHR empowers the WHO to act as the main global surveillance system. The Regulations also outline the criteria to determine whether or not a particular event constitutes a PHEIC (Public Health Emergency of International Concern).

What are the Challenges to the Healthcare Sector Globally?

- **Lack of Access to Healthcare:**
 - Despite advances in medical technology, **many populations around the world still lack access** to basic healthcare services, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.
 - As populations around the world age, there is **increasing demand for long-term care services**, which are often expensive and not covered by traditional health insurance.
- **Healthcare Infrastructure:**
 - Public health data and infrastructure are fragmented and lacking any global standard causing a **major concern regarding quality and reliability of existing healthcare systems**.
 - Besides that, a large part of hospital expenditures is used to correct preventable medical mistakes or infections that **people catch in hospitals. Additionally, medical staff are in short supply**.
- **Affordability and Disparity:**
 - Healthcare can be expensive, and many individuals, particularly those in low- and middle-income countries, struggle to afford basic healthcare services.
 - Despite advances in medical technology, significant inequalities in health outcomes persist globally, particularly **for marginalized populations**.
- **Scarcity of Health Personnels:**
 - The healthcare sector faces shortages of trained and qualified health workers in many countries, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.
 - India has 1 government doctor per 10,189 people (the WHO recommends a ratio of 1:1,000), **indicating a shortage of 6,00,000 doctors**.
- **Non-Communicable Diseases:**
 - Non-communicable diseases, such as **heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes, are becoming increasingly common** and place a significant burden on healthcare systems.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. What is the basic principle behind vaccine development? How do vaccines work? What approaches were adopted by the Indian vaccine manufacturers to produce COVID-19 vaccines? **(2022)**

Source: [DTE](#)

