

Joint Press Release from Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, Prime Minister Erna Solberg of Norway, and President John Dramani Mahama of Ghana in connection with the high-level event “Securing a Healthy Future” on the post-Ebola lessons and follow-up.

World leaders meet to prevent Ebola-like outbreaks in the future

NEW YORK, September 2015 – When Ebola struck in local communities in West Africa, far too few health workers were at hand. They had insufficient supply of medical equipment and no regional and national health system to back them up with crisis leadership, surveillance, guidance and resources. In addition, the response at international and global level was slow to take off and effective only in a later phase.

Based on this experience, at the beginning of the year Germany’s Chancellor Angela Merkel, Ghana’s President John Dramani Mahama and Norway’s Prime Minister Erna Solberg have taken an initiative to better prepare the world for future global health crises.

The three leaders emphasise that there are many more countries with similar, *or weaker*, health systems than those of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia. Furthermore, past experience with SARS, Swine flu, Ebola and MERS tells us that new and threatening epidemics and pandemics *will* come.

Alarm bells were sounded after the recent big influenza pandemics. Recommendations were put forward, and action agreed upon. However, when Ebola struck in 2014, the system failed again. As the three leaders pointed out, the world cannot afford to stay idle until the next health crisis.

This Saturday, the three leaders will host a high-level event “Securing a Healthy Future: Resilient Health Systems to Fight Epidemics and Ensure Healthy Lives” on the margins of the UN Summit for the Adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in New York. The event will gather key actors to give recommendations to Tanzania’s President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete who heads the *UN High-Level Panel on the Global Response to Health Crises*. The Panel had been established in April 2015 by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon upon a proposal by the three leaders. The event will see discussions and keynote speeches on the relevance of strong health systems for crisis reaction and prevention as well as on resilient systems’ positive impact on sustainable development.

UNSG Ban Ki-Moon will be present at the meeting, together with President Johnson Sirleaf from Liberia, Bill Gates, leaders of the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), the Vaccine Alliance (GAVI), and leading NGO Save the Children International. A new “Roadmap: Healthy Systems – Healthy Lives” will be launched by German Chancellor Angela Merkel for further discussion with stakeholders in the coming months. The Roadmap Process is to be concluded on the margins of the replenishment conference of the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria in September 2016.

In support of the Roadmap, the World Health Organization, World Bank Group and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will launch the Primary Health Care Performance Initiative which will help countries track key performance indicators and share knowledge to drive concrete improvements in their primary health care systems.