

Webinar on  
“Global dialogue on the Pandemic Treaty”  
Department of Global Health, Stellenbosch  
University, South Africa -  
Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021

**Presentation by John Dramani Mahama,  
former President of the Republic of Ghana**

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## Webinar on “Global dialogue on the Pandemic Treaty”

- Thank you **Ms Malebona Precious Matsoso**, Member of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPPR);
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- Thank you, **Professor Usuf Chikte**, Professor Emeritus, Division of Health Systems and Public Health, Department of Global Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Stellenbosch University;

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- To the Department of Global Health, Stellenbosch University, thanks for inviting me to share few thoughts with you on the need for concerted, coordinated and coherent global action on pandemics in order to:
  - Halt the current COVID-19;
  - Prevent future pandemics; and
  - Even if they occur, we ensure future pandemics do not catch the global community flat footed as COVID-19 did almost two years ago, starting from Wuhan, China.

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- The human cost, financial loss, job losses and other adverse effects of COVID-19 have been grave and dire; and perhaps may count as the worse human tragedy since the world wars.
- Yet, researchers are unable to tell what the long-terms effects of COVID-19 would be on people who survive the infection.

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- For example, in the long run, we know Syphilis progresses to affect even the nervous system – but that of COVID is unknown.
- Even with COVID vaccines which only prevent severe illness and associated deaths, we know there is acute inequity in access and distribution against the global south.

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- We also know this pandemic could have been contained if global leadership had been strong, visionary, proactive and concerted.
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- We cannot repeat this mistake again!
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- This is why I fully support the recommendations of the **Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPPR) for a Global Public Health Convention** to be established.

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- For me, as a historian, this quest for political leaders to tackle threats to the human race dates back to the fourteenth century Italian city states.
- What has been unclear is the nature of the vehicle to execute the task.

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- I prefer a United Nations Convention on Pandemic Prevention that will be:
  - Respected by the United Nations General Assembly including all member states and all organs of the UN,
  - Anchored in the spirit of cooperation, solidarity and equity,
  - A strengthening scaffold for the World Health Organisation and other structures, which may be necessary to secure global health.



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- I believe if we commit to a viable Convention and bring onboard all policy actors including Heads of States, the public and private sector (including BigPharma) and researchers we can defeat the current pandemic and be better prepared for the future.
- Fortunately, the WHO has shown commitment towards this step. As a result, and with its convening power, I am informed in November, the World Health Assembly will hold a special session on pandemic preparedness and response.

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- But this must not end in Geneva at the WHO headquarters; it must travel all the way to New York, where I know my good friend Antonio Guterres will be glad to receive it for further action.

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- **While We Work On The Convention To Prevent Pandemics**

- I wish to emphasise that we collectively curb COVID
- Researchers must use appropriate Modelling tools to provide likely future scenarios to enable humanity to device remedies ahead.
- Health for All as contained in Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG3) must be strengthened and pursued with emphasis on Primary Health Care to save humans, animals (Zoonosis), and our planet, earth.

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- **While We Work On The Convention To Prevent Pandemics**
- Civil Society Organisations must also be allowed good enough space because they have proven to be partners in development.
- Use multi-stakeholder advocacy to improve availability of vaccines, its distribution and build confidence in COVID-19 vaccines; while protecting children and vulnerable populations.

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- Only yesterday (Wednesday) during the “John Snow Society Annual Lecture” at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Dr. Fauci disclosed that more vaccines will be available by 2022.
- But I dare say, that will be too late for humanity, particularly for us in Low and Lower Middle Income Countries.

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- **Conclusion**

- If COVID-19 continues to ravage humanity and we are yet to overcome it, then let's act as a consortium of the willing to avoid further pandemics.
- This is why I accepted to join you today in the middle of my Thank You Tour of my country, Ghana.

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- I wish you all great success in your endeavours as we strive for a safer world.
- Stay Safe!
- Thanks you.