

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD MEETING ON THE PANDEMIC FUND’S ROLE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CLADE I MPOX OUTBREAK

September 6, 2024

1. The Pandemic Fund held an emergency Board meeting on Friday, September 6, 2024, chaired jointly by the Pandemic Fund Board Co-Chairs, Sabin Nsanzimana and M. Chatib Basri, to discuss how best to respond to the ongoing mpox outbreak. Mpox was declared as a Public Health Emergency of Continental Security (“PHECS”) by the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) on August 13, 2024, and as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (“PHEIC”) by the World Health Organization (WHO) on August 14, 2024.

2. In setting the stage, the Co-Chairs noted that the mpox outbreak had exposed significant weaknesses in capacities and capabilities to prevent, detect, and rapidly respond to infectious diseases, particularly in Africa. They emphasized that many of the areas identified for urgent investment in affected or at-risk countries were strongly aligned with the Pandemic Fund’s medium-term Strategic Plan. These include surveillance, laboratories, and a trained and scalable workforce, along with stronger national and regional public health institutions and networks and engaged and empowered communities. The Pandemic Fund’s unique position to bolster prevention, preparedness, and response (PPR) capacities in countries affected by mpox or at risk was underscored.

I. UPDATES FROM THE WHO, AFRICA CDC, AND IMPLEMENTING ENTITIES ON ONGOING AND PLANNED SUPPORT AND COORDINATION

3. Representatives from key partner organizations provided updates. The WHO shared the latest epidemiological situation related to mpox in the affected areas of the Africa continent along with an overview of the WHO Global mpox SPRP and partner coordination efforts. Africa CDC provided an update on the joint Africa CDC-WHO Continental Preparedness and Response Plan for Africa, which involves 24 partner agencies, emphasizing the Pandemic Fund’s relevance in the context of the current mpox outbreak and other similar emergencies, and the unique opportunities that the Fund offers that could be optimized. UNICEF, FAO, GAVI, Global

Fund, CEPI, World Bank, AfDB, ADB and EIB shared their actions to date as well as planned support for the mpox emergency.

II. PRESENTATION BY SECRETARIAT ON OPTIONS FOR SUPPORT

4. The Secretariat summarized the paper that was circulated in advance, noting the strong rationale for the Pandemic Fund to support countries affected by mpox and those at risk, and presented for the Board's consideration two options for Pandemic Fund support: 1) Fast-tracking the allocation of funds under the ongoing second Call for Proposals to support mpox affected/high-risk countries¹; and 2) developing a Special Financing facility for public health emergencies, including the current mpox outbreak. In presenting these options, the Secretariat noted the importance of adhering to some key principles of engagement, including: 1) maximizing efficiency and impact, by deploying resources in the most timely and strategic manner; 2) ensuring that the Pandemic Fund's efforts complement, rather than overlap with what other agencies are already doing or plan to do; and 3) alignment with the Pandemic Fund's medium-term Strategic Plan and reliance on Board-established policies and processes.

III. BOARD DISCUSSION

5. The Board thanked partner organizations for their updates, expressing appreciation for the coordination efforts under way, while noting that greater clarity on the funding needs and gaps for the mpox response would be helpful.

6. The Board unanimously recognized that the mpox outbreak demonstrated the need and relevance of the Pandemic Fund and its emphasis on strengthening capacities and capabilities that are critical in preparedness to tackling health security threats, including disease surveillance, diagnostics and laboratory networks, and health workforce in low- and middle-income countries.

7. The Board expressed support for the rationale and principles for the Pandemic Fund's engagement in the context of the current mpox outbreak and thanked the Secretariat for the clear presentation and all the hard work. The Board emphasized that such support to countries will be critical not only to the rapid containment of the current mpox outbreak but more broadly, to achieving the Pandemic Fund's mission to build the capacity of low- and middle-income countries to prevent, prepare for, and be ready to respond rapidly and in a timely manner to emerging disease threats.

¹ As defined in the WHO's Global mpox SPRP.

8. Noting that the two options presented for the Pandemic Fund's engagement were complementary, the Board agreed on the following:

- Firstly, underscoring the need to act with speed and efficiency to address the current mpox outbreak, the Board agreed to fast-tracking support, over the next two to three weeks, to countries affected by the virus. This support will build on existing processes and projects submitted by affected countries under the current \$500 million 2nd Call for Proposals with a focus to directly strengthen country preparedness capacities in surveillance, laboratories, and public health workforce. While noting that the amount allocated for fast-tracked support could be carved out from within the \$500 million envelope, Members indicated the need for flexibility to consider a potential expansion of the envelope, if needed, once the Board had seen and reviewed the TAP's recommendations related to projects evaluated under the 2nd Call.
- Secondly, the Board agreed on the need to develop a mechanism for Special Financing to accelerate support to countries experiencing public health emergencies and will continue discussions in its next meeting. Members noted that such a mechanism would not only help fill gaps but also, promote coordinated support for countries.
- A third option, which would be that of granting direct funding to the WHO and Africa CDC, each of which had already developed a strategy accompanied by an estimate of needs, was also proposed.

IV. NEXT STEPS

9. The Board agreed to meet again on September 19th to decide on the early (fast-tracked) allocation of funding for mpox, based on proposals submitted under the 2nd Call for Proposals, and announce this at the Pandemic Fund UNGA event on September 25. Accordingly, the Secretariat was tasked with sharing the TAP's recommendations on projects under the 2nd Call that cover mpox affected/ high-risk countries. The TAP Leadership noted that this information would become available and be shared with the Board in the next few days. The Board agreed that following this, it would provide guidance to the Secretariat on the preferred amount to be allocated for mpox, which would enable the Secretariat to share some scenarios to facilitate the Board's early allocation decision on September 19th. Further, it was agreed that the Secretariat would consult with the Board in the coming weeks to develop the Special Financing mechanism for the medium-term.