

13 January 2026

**Letter to the Ambassadors and  
Permanent Representatives to the  
United Nations Office in Geneva**

Dear Ambassadors,

On 10 December 2025, the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (GPMB) had the honor of meeting with the Co-Chairs of the Intergovernmental Working Group (IGWG) on the WHO Pandemic Agreement to discuss your tremendous work and progress on the Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing (PABS) Annex.

The Board was encouraged by this progress and inspired by the dedication of Member States to complete negotiations with urgency, as evidenced in your agreement to extend the 4th IGWG meeting and resume deliberations on 20-22 January 2026.

Having anticipated the global shock of COVID-19, and analyzed the impact of the most recent Public Health Emergencies of International Concern (PHEICS), we underscore the fact that access to medical countermeasures remains the central constraint to effective pandemic response. The GPMB views the success of the PABS negotiations to be the single most important, collective step that WHO Member States can now take to reduce the impact of future pandemics. In an era of shared and accelerating risk, pandemic protection is only possible through such multilateral action.

The GPMB appreciates the challenges inherent in negotiating the PABS Annex and has itself emphasized that the global context for pandemic preparedness has changed profoundly.


These realities have only deepened the Board's steadfast conclusion, based on 8 years of analyses and insights, that the PABS Annex is fundamental to mitigating the unacceptable health, social, economic and political costs of pandemics by assuring rapid access to samples and data, and effective sharing of resultant countermeasures. In this context, the GPMB also reiterates its concern that other arrangements do not compromise the effectiveness of this multilateral instrument.

Excellencies, as your negotiators prepare to meet again on 20 January, the GPMB urges you to enter this final phase of negotiations with ambition, unity and urgency. The certain benefits of the PABS Annex to all parties will always and substantially outweigh any perceived costs.

Yours faithfully on behalf of the GPMB,



Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović  
Former President of Croatia  
Co-Chair



Joy Phumaphi  
Former Minister of Health of Botswana  
Co-Chair

ENCL.: (1)

### *GPMB Members*

Palitha Abeykoon, Senior Advisor to the Ministry of Health of Sri Lanka and former WHO Special Envoy for COVID-19 Preparedness and Response

Ibrahim Abubakar, Vice Provost for Health at University College London (UCL) and Professor of Infectious Disease Epidemiology

Bente Angell-Hansen, Former diplomat of Norway and former President of the EFTA Surveillance Authority

Victor J. Dzau, President of the United States National Academy of Medicine and Vice-Chair of the US National Research Council

Maha El Rabbat, Former Minister of Health and Population of Egypt and former WHO Special Envoy for COVID-19 Preparedness and Response

Chris Elias President of the Global Development Program at the Gates Foundation former President and CEO of PATH

Zijian Feng, Professor and PhD Supervisor, School of Public Health and Emergency Management, Southern University of Science and Technology; Vice President of the Chinese Preventive Medicine Association; Senior Research Fellow of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Henrietta Fore, Former Executive Director of UNICEF, former USAID Administrator, and CEO & Chairman, Holsman International

Jayati Ghosh, Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst

Naoko Ishii, Former Deputy Vice Minister of Finance of Japan and Professor and Executive Vice President at the University of Tokyo

Iлона Kickbusch, Founder and Chair of the Global Health Centre at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva

Matthew Stone, Veterinary epidemiologist and former Deputy Director-General – International Standards and Science at the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)

### *About GPMB*

The Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (GPMB) is an independent monitoring and accountability body established in 2018 by the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the President of the World Bank to strengthen preparedness for global health crises. Composed of political leaders, agency principals, and world-class experts, the Board provides independent, authoritative assessments of global progress in building and sustaining the capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to disease outbreaks, epidemics, pandemics, and other health emergencies.

The GPMB's landmark contributions include its 2019 warning of 'a world unprepared', immediately before COVID-19 upended the daily lives of billions; its pioneering call in 2020-2021 for independent, multisectoral monitoring of infectious risks; its release of the first-ever framework for that purpose in 2023; and in 2025, its latest advice for rapidly adapting global pandemic preparedness to a dangerous new era of fragmenting geopolitics.