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WHO takes new initiative to improve pandemic preparedness

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Inviting stakeholders to this global call to action to advance respiratory pathogen pandemic preparedness



To help countries better prepare for future pandemics, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has launched a new initiative that provides guidance on integrated planning for responding to any respiratory pathogen such as influenza or coronaviruses.

The new Preparedness and Resilience for Emerging Threats Initiative, or PRET, incorporates the latest tools and approaches for shared learning and collective action established during the COVID-19 pandemic and other recent public health emergencies.

Through the initiative, WHO will use a mode of transmission approach to guide countries in pandemic planning, given that many capacities and capabilities are common among groups of pathogens. PRET answers the call for technical guidance and support for promoting and strengthening integrated preparedness and response, as outlined in World Health Assembly resolutions.

The PRET Initiative's first module focuses on respiratory pathogens, including influenza, coronaviruses, and respiratory syncytial virus. Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the possible threat of avian influenza, this module will enable countries to critically review, test, and update their respiratory pandemic planning efforts to ensure they have the functional capacities and capabilities in place.

A process is underway to identify the next group of pathogens, such as arboviruses, to be addressed under this initiative. This will follow priorities identified through the ten proposals to strengthen the global architecture for health emergency preparedness, response, and resilience (HEPR).