



## PRET & The Big Catch-Up Initiatives

**For Prelims:** The Preparedness and Resilience for Emerging Threats (PRET) Initiative, The Big Catch-Up Initiative, [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#), [International Health Regulations \(IHR\)](#), [UNICEF](#)

**For Mains:** Initiatives to Overcome the Impact of [Covid 19 Pandemic](#)

### Why in News?

In response to the [Covid-19](#) pandemic, **two initiatives - PRET and the Big Catch-up - have been launched to better prepare for future outbreaks** of similar scale and devastation, as well as to **boost vaccination rates among children**.

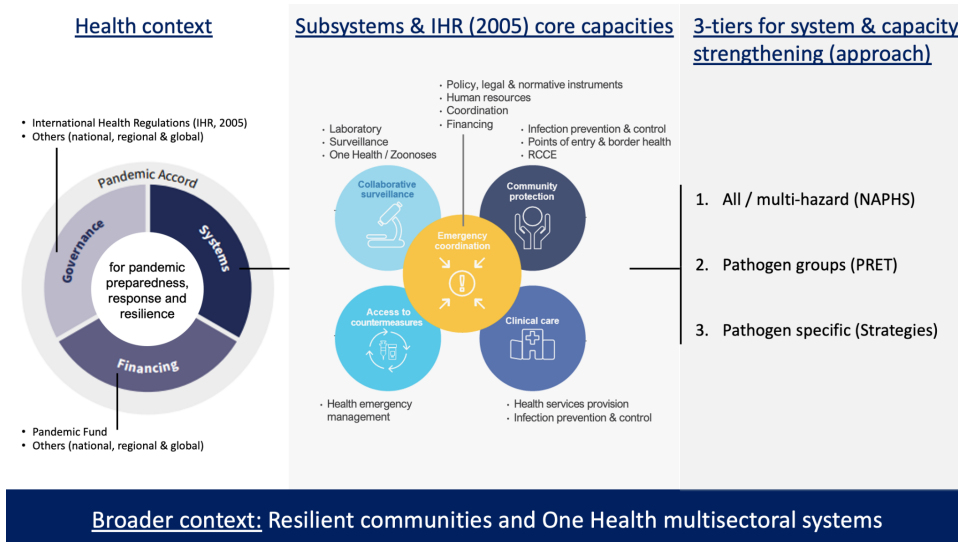
### What is the PRET Initiative?

- **About:**
  - **The Preparedness and Resilience for Emerging Threats (PRET) Initiative** was launched by the [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#) and operates under the aegis of the [International Health Regulations \(IHR\)](#), **2005**, which is a critical international legal instrument for managing public health emergencies.
    - The initiative **was announced at the Global Meeting for Future Respiratory Pathogen Pandemics** held in Geneva, Switzerland.
- **Aim:**
  - It focuses on improving pandemic preparedness for groups of pathogens based on their mode of transmission.
- **Three Tiers of Pandemic Preparedness:** It recognizes that there are three tiers of systems and capacities relevant to pandemic preparedness:
  - those that are cross-cutting for all or multi-hazards
  - those that are relevant for groups of [pathogens](#) (respiratory, arboviruses etc.)
  - those that are specific to a pathogen.
- **Coordinating Efforts:**
  - As part of its efforts, the WHO convenes an informal coordination forum known as the **Respiratory Pathogens Partners Engagement Forum (R-PEF)** which enables WHO and partners to exchange information on planned activities and other developments on planned activities.

### Note:

- In Feb 2023, **WHO published a 'Zero-Draft' of the Pandemic Treaty**, aiming to bring in Global and National-Level [Pandemic Preparedness](#).
- It calls for **increased global coordination and cooperation in the preparation for and response to pandemics** and other global health emergencies.

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## What is The Big Catch-Up Initiative?

### ▪ About:

- It was launched by the **WHO**, **UNICEF**, **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** along with **Immunization Agenda 2030** and many other global and national health partners, a **targeted global effort to boost vaccination**.

### ▪ Aim:

- It aims to **protect populations from vaccine-preventable outbreaks like -measles, diphtheria, polio and yellow fever** - save children's lives and strengthen national health systems.

### ▪ Main Focus:

- The initiative will **pay special attention to the 20 countries** — Afghanistan, Angola, Brazil, Cameroon, Chad, DPRK, DRC, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Somalia, Madagascar, Mexico, Mozambique, Myanmar, Tanzania and Vietnam which are home to a majority of the children who have missed their vaccine doses.

### ▪ Salient Features of the Plan:

- Strengthening health care workforces
- Improving health service delivery
- Building trust and demand for vaccines within communities
- Addressing gaps and obstacles to restoring immunisation

### ▪ Need:

- More than 100 countries **registered a drop in immunisation levels** as the pandemic burdened health services as well as disrupted imports and exports of medical supplies.
- Access to healthcare was further compounded by strict lockdown measures, travel restrictions and depleting financial and human resources.
  - India is among the 20 countries in the world where around 75% of children have missed essential immunisation** against preventable but critical diseases in 2021.

### ▪ India's Efforts for Vaccination:

- As a result of the pandemic, immunisation efforts have been hampered, and some countries have already begun showing considerable progress.
  - India managed to record a strong recovery in essential vaccines in 2022**
- India's Major Initiatives for Vaccination include:
  - Covid Vaccine Drive**
  - Universal Immunization Programme which includes Indradhanush 4.0**
  - Mass Immunization Campaign for Measles-Rubella (MR)**
  - Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV)**
  - CERVAVAC vaccine for the prevention of cervical cancer**

- [Pulse polio programme](#)

**Note:**

- [World Immunization Week](#) is a health campaign coordinated by the WHO) and **celebrated in the last week of April, every year.**
- It aims to promote the use of vaccines to protect people of all ages against disease.

**UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Yera's Questions (PYQs)**

***Prelims***

**Q. 'Mission Indradhanush' launched by the Government of India pertains to (2016)**

- (a) immunization of children and pregnant women
- (b) construction of smart cities across the country
- (c) India's own search for the Earth-like planets in outer space
- (d) New Educational Policy

**Ans: (a)**

***Mains***

**Q. Critically examine the role of WHO in providing global health security during the Covid-19 pandemic. (2020)**

**Source: WHO**

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