



Pandemic Treaty

For Prelims: [World Health Assembly \(WHA\)](#), [genomic sequences](#), [antimicrobial resistance](#), [Public Health Emergency of International Concern \(PHEIC\)](#), [International Health Regulations \(2005\)](#)

For Mains: Key components and developments of the Draft Pandemic Treaty, Existing framework for Global Health Cooperation

Source: [WHO](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the [World Health Assembly \(WHA\)](#) in the annual meeting, agreed on a set of critical amendments to the [International Health Regulations \(2005\) \(IHR\)](#), and made concrete commitments to completing negotiations on a global pandemic agreement by 2025.

- These amendments will strengthen global preparedness, surveillance and responses to public health emergencies, including pandemics.

What is the World Health Assembly (WHA)?

- **About:**
 - The World Health Assembly (WHA) is **WHO's decision-making body** attended by delegations from all of WHO's member states.
 - It is **held yearly** at the headquarter of WHO, i.e., Geneva, Switzerland.
- **Functions of WHA:**
 - **Deciding** on the Organization's policies.
 - **Appointment** of the Director-General of WHO.
 - **Administration** of financial policies.
 - **Review and approval** of the proposed programme budget.

What are the Key Amendments Agreed to IHR?

- **Definition:**
 - Introduction of a **definition of pandemic emergency** to enhance international collaboration in response to potential pandemics.
 - Definition includes criteria such as wide **geographical spread, exceeding health system capacity**, causing social and economic disruption, and requiring rapid international action.
- **Commitment to Solidarity and Equity:**
 - It includes establishing a **Coordinating Financial Mechanism** to support the identification and access to financing needed to address the needs and priorities of

developing countries.

- It will also include developing and **strengthening core capacities** and other pandemic emergency prevention, preparedness and response-related capacities.

▪ **Cooperation for Effective Implementation:**

- It involves creation of a **States Parties Committee** to promote cooperation and effective implementation of the amended regulations
- The creation of **National IHR Authorities** to improve coordination of implementation within and among countries.

What is the Need for Global Health Cooperation?

▪ **Curbing Infectious Diseases:**

- Pandemics like [Covid-19](#) have highlighted the interconnectedness of our world. A disease outbreak in one country can rapidly spread across borders. Global cooperation allows for
 - **Information Sharing:** Early detection and sharing of disease outbreaks **enables a faster global response**. The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)'s role in identifying and tracking **Covid-19 variants is a prime example**.
 - **Coordinated Research & Development:** Collaboration facilitates faster development of vaccines, diagnostics, and treatments.

▪ **Addressing Antibiotic Resistance:**

- The overuse and misuse of antibiotics in one country can create resistant bacteria that spread globally. Global cooperation helps in
 - **Standardised Practices:** Establishing common guidelines for antibiotic use in humans and animals helps slow resistance.
 - According to the WHO, [antimicrobial resistance](#) is a global health threat that could lead to millions of deaths each year if not addressed collaboratively.

▪ **Chronic Disease Management:**

- [Non-communicable diseases](#) like heart disease and diabetes are a growing global concern. **Cooperation helps in knowledge sharing.**
 - Sharing best practices in prevention, treatment, and lifestyle interventions allows countries to learn from each other. For example, the [Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases \(GACD\)](#).

▪ **Health Equity and Access:**

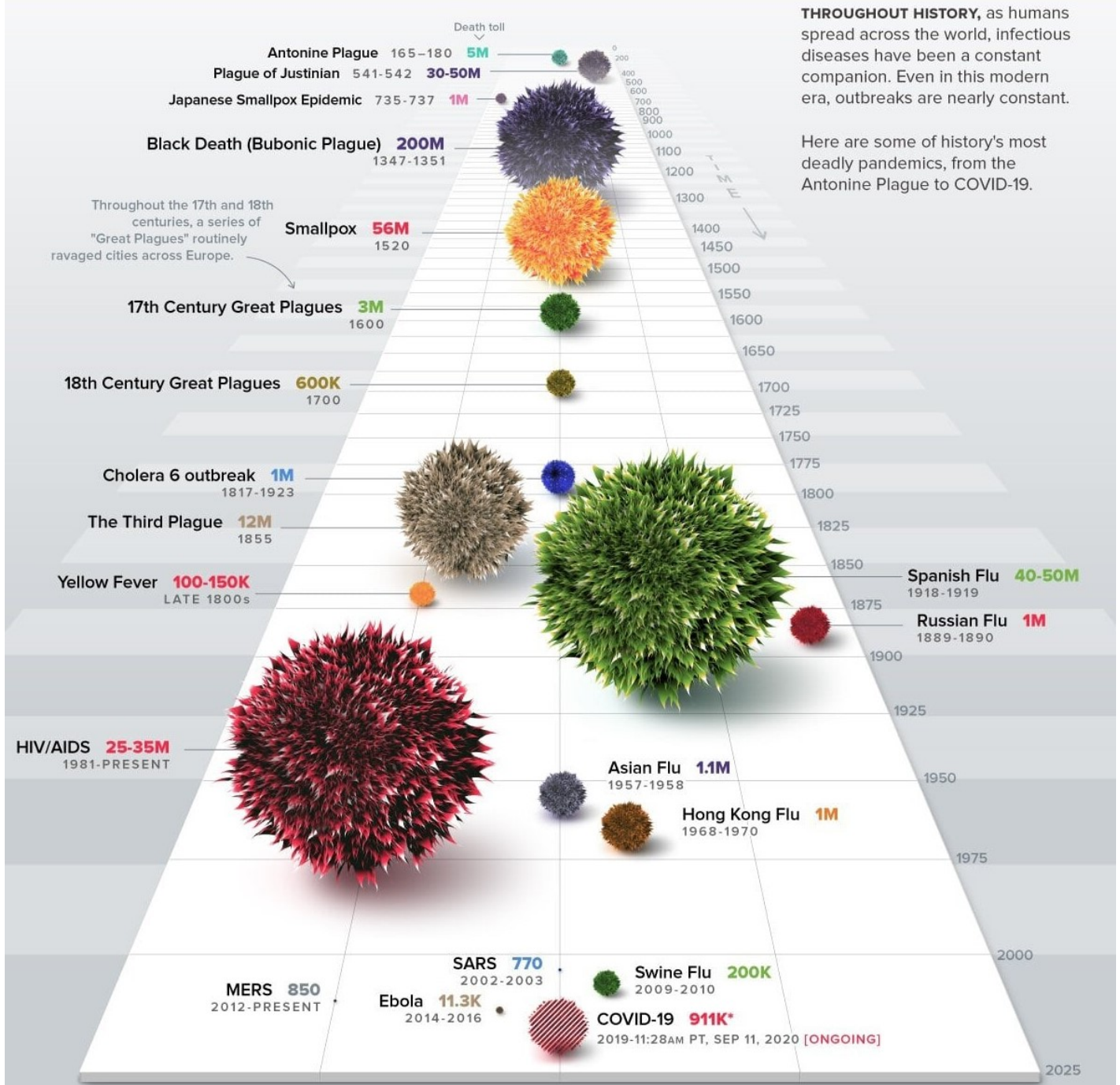
- Many countries lack the resources to tackle health challenges effectively. Global cooperation promotes technology transfer.
 - **Sharing knowledge and technology allows developing countries to improve their healthcare systems.** Initiatives like the [Medicines Patent Pool](#) facilitate access to affordable generic drugs.

HISTORY OF PANDEMICS

PAN-DEM-IC (of a disease) prevalent over a whole country or the world.

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, as humans spread across the world, infectious diseases have been a constant companion. Even in this modern era, outbreaks are nearly constant.

Here are some of history's most deadly pandemics, from the Antonine Plague to COVID-19.



What is the Existing Framework for Global Health Cooperation?

▪ Multilateral Agencies:

- Various multilateral organisations like **WHO**, [UNICEF](#), [UNFPA](#), and [UNAIDS](#) play crucial roles in specific health areas like child health, reproductive health, and [HIV/AIDS](#).
- The WHO acts as the central coordinating authority on global health within the [United Nations](#) system.
 - It **sets international health standards**, provides technical assistance to

countries, and monitors and coordinates the global response to health emergencies.

▪ **International Health Regulations (IHR):**

- This is a **legally binding agreement** between 196 countries. It outlines the rights and obligations of countries regarding public health events with international implications.

▪ **Global Health Initiatives:**

- These are targeted programs tackling specific health challenges. Examples include the **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria**, and [Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance](#).

▪ **Public-Private Partnerships:**

- Collaboration between governments, NGOs, and the private sector allows for leveraging resources and expertise.
 - Example, **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**.

▪ **Regional Organizations:**

- Regional bodies like the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) for the Americas and the African Union play a role in coordinating health efforts within their regions.

Conclusion

The **World Health Assembly's (WHA) recent amendments to the International Health Regulations (IHR)** and commitment to a global pandemic agreement by 2025 signify a significant step towards improved global health security.

These changes, including a definition for pandemic emergencies, a focus on equity and financing, and stronger national and international cooperation, aim to equip the world to better detect, prevent, and respond to future health threats.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. What are the recent amendments agreed regarding the pandemic treaty? Also, highlight the existing framework for Global Health Cooperation.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q1. With reference to agriculture in India, how can the technique of 'genome sequencing', often seen in the news, be used in the immediate future? (2017)

1. Genome sequencing can be used to identify genetic markers for disease resistance and drought tolerance in various crop plants.
2. This technique helps in reducing the time required to develop new varieties of crop plants.
3. It can be used to decipher the host-pathogen relationships in crops.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (d)

Mains

Q. What are the research and developmental achievements in applied biotechnology? How will these achievements help to uplift the poorer sections of society? **(2021)**

Q. What is the basic principle behind vaccine development? How do vaccines work? What approaches were adopted by the Indian vaccine manufacturers to produce COVID-19 vaccines? **(2022)**

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/pandemic-treaty-3>

