

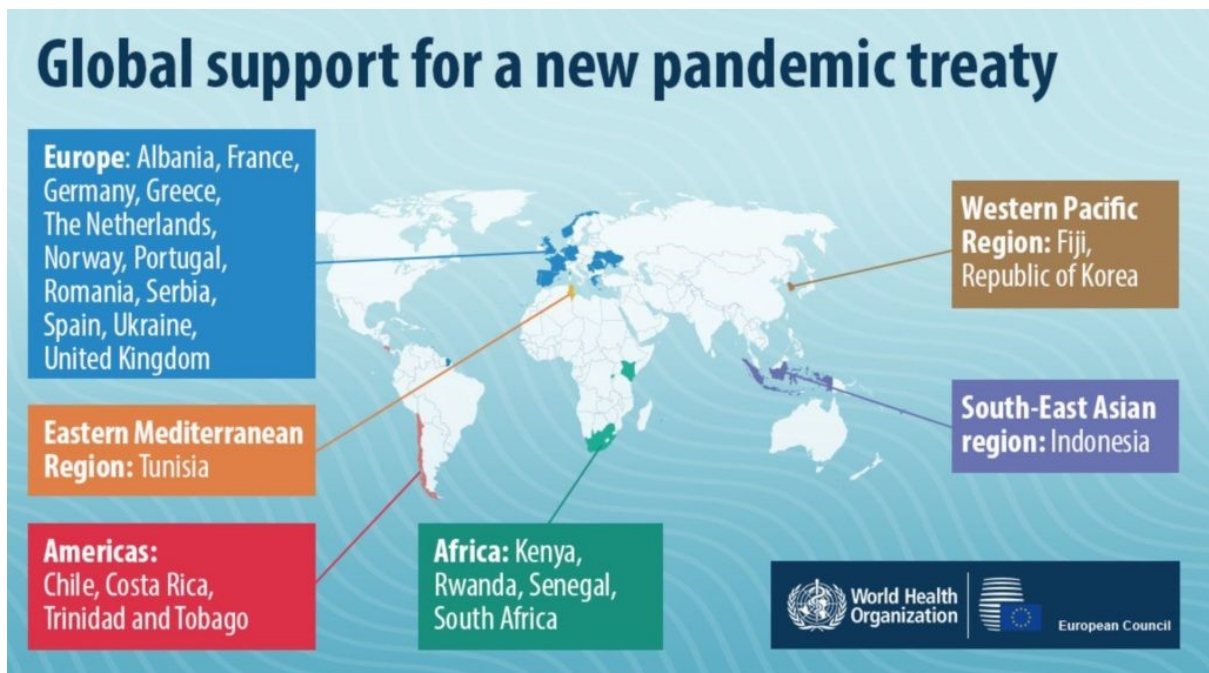
GLOBAL PANDEMIC TREATY – INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

NEWS: **WHO Member States have finalized a draft Pandemic Agreement**, aimed at strengthening global health security in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

About the Global Pandemic Treaty

- The **Global Pandemic Treaty** is envisioned as a **legally binding international instrument** designed to improve the **global response** to future pandemics.
- The treaty aims to **institutionalize cooperation** among nations to prevent, prepare for, and respond effectively to pandemics using a unified framework.



Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB)

- The **INB** was established at the **second special session of the World Health Assembly** in December 2021, during the peak of the COVID-19 crisis.
- The INB consists of **all 194 WHO Member States**, including **India**, and is responsible for negotiating and drafting the treaty.
- The **INB functions under Member State leadership**, maintaining a commitment to **inclusiveness, transparency, efficiency, and consensus-driven negotiations**.
- The **United States** withdrew from the INB negotiations after **President Donald Trump** pulled the U.S. out of the **World Health Organization (WHO)** during his presidency.

Purpose and Objective of the Treaty

- The treaty's main goal is to **strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response (PPR)** through a **globally coordinated legal framework**.

- It seeks to **overcome fragmented national responses** and foster **early warning systems, equitable resource distribution, and capacity building**.

Key Components of the Agreement

a. Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing (PABS) Mechanism

- Proposes a **transparent and fair system** for **timely access to pathogens** and related benefits such as **vaccines, diagnostics, and treatments** during pandemics.

b. One Health Approach

- Recognizes the **interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health** in preventing zoonotic diseases.
- Encourages **interdisciplinary coordination** to detect and control diseases at their source.

c. Global R&D Capacity

- Seeks to establish **geographically diverse and distributed research hubs** to facilitate faster **scientific response** and **regional preparedness**.

d. Technology and Knowledge Transfer

- Aims to ensure **developing countries gain access** to vital technologies through **shared manufacturing expertise and licensing frameworks**.
- **Article 11** has been **contentious** as it mandates the **transfer of medical technologies** to less-resourced nations.

e. Health Workforce and Emergency Preparedness

- Calls for **building, training, and mobilizing** a global **multidisciplinary health workforce** capable of responding swiftly to health crises.

f. Supply Chain and Financial Mechanisms

- Proposes a **coordinated global logistics network** for the distribution of medical supplies.
- Includes a **financial mechanism** to support rapid procurement and equitable access during emergencies.

g. Health System Resilience

- Encourages countries to **strengthen their domestic health systems**, ensuring they can **withstand future health emergencies** without collapsing.

WHO's Role and Respect for National Sovereignty

- The treaty **reaffirms that WHO will not override national sovereignty** or impose laws, lockdowns, vaccine mandates, or travel restrictions.
- WHO's role remains **technical, advisory, and coordinating**, without enforcing compliance through legal compulsion.

India's Institutional Mechanisms for Pandemic Response

a. National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)

- Acts as India's **key epidemiological surveillance body**, responsible for detecting, monitoring, and managing infectious disease outbreaks.
- Advises the government with **real-time data**, facilitates **lab networks**, and issues **technical guidelines**.

b. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)

- Leads India's overall **policy, coordination, and operational response** during pandemics.
- Responsible for **vaccine distribution**, infrastructure planning, and **collaboration with state health departments**.

c. National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)

- Under the **Disaster Management Act, 2005**, NDMA plays a vital role in **multi-sectoral planning, risk mitigation, and inter-agency coordination** during pandemics.
- NDMA ensures **logistics, containment protocols, and continuity of essential services**.

Significance of the Global Pandemic Treaty

a. Advancing Global Health Equity

- The treaty aims to **bridge inequalities** by mandating **equitable sharing** of vaccines and medical supplies, especially through the **PABS framework**.

b. Strengthening Multilateralism

- Despite the U.S. withdrawal, **193 nations remained committed**, signaling the global consensus on the **need for multilateral cooperation** in public health.

c. Building Pandemic Resilience

- The agreement reinforces commitments to:
 - **Protect health workers**
 - **Share pathogen data**
 - **Facilitate vaccine production in developing countries**

d. Legal Preparedness for Future Crises

- The treaty sets a **durable international legal framework** that:
 - **Defines clear obligations**

- Facilitates **coordination and accountability**
- Supports **timely and consistent actions** during global health emergencies

Source: <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/health/who-members-finalise-proposal-for-pandemic-treaty>