Managing the Risk and Impact of Future Epidemics: Options for Public Private Collaboration

29 July 2015

This project is supported by The Boston Consulting Group (BCG)
Discussions at the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos last January highlighted a **strong desire from stakeholders to pool various lessons** and propose practical ideas for future responses.

While there are various processes within the international community to review the response to the Ebola crisis, discussions at Davos highlighted a **need to examine a wider scope of partnerships and innovations particularly within the business community**.

Several senior leaders from business and international organizations invited the Forum to use its position as an international institution for public-private cooperation to help capture the various lessons from the Ebola response and create a practical proposition for public-private collaboration to help manage the risks of impact of future epidemics.
Approach

- **March**: Research and analyze private sector initiatives
  - 200+ initiatives analyzed from EPSMG, OCHA, UNMEER sources

- **April**: Conduct expert interviews
  - 60+ expert interviews spanning public sector, private sector, and civil society
  - *Roundtable discussions* in Geneva and Lagos with 70+ participants; participation in *Ebola Innovation Summit* and other relevant conferences during this period

- **May**: Hold roundtable discussions and workshops

- **June**: Prepare report
Effort considered preparedness, response, and recovery, with a focus on response

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Coordination and management

Community engagement

Advocacy and communication

Information and data management

Research and development

Financing
Findings: Private sector vital to Ebola response, demonstrating value of public-private collaboration

Emergencies and epidemics increasingly complex - need new solutions, new ways of working, new partners

In the Ebola response, the commercial private sector made a significant contribution
  - 150+ companies (likely an underestimate)
  - $200M in recorded cash or in-kind donations; actual amount estimated to be 3 – 6x higher

About 20% of private sector players involved moved past donor role to become partners in response activities
  - Engaged from grassroots to research and innovation
Private sector disaggregated into three broad groups

Groups vary in motivations, actions and capabilities – future collaboration models should recognize diversity
In-country operators provide immediate on the ground capacity and inform the response

- **About this group:** Multinationals with in-country presence or locally-based companies. Motivated by business continuity incentive and a sense of responsibility to their communities.

- **Wide ranging role:**
  - First to see issues on ground
  - Protect their people and connect to their communities
  - Effective advocates with governments, decision makers
  - Immediately available resources – people, equipment
  - Integral to recovery by returning to business

- **Self organized and coordinated** during Ebola outbreak (via EPSMG) – however, efforts not tightly integrated with public sector response efforts.

- **Future models:** Range of choices to organize and link to public sector – from formal networks focused on public health to informal groups that activate for emergencies.

**Recommendation:** Create local private sector networks to coordinate response activities, create a direct link to public sector activities.
Expert capability companies partnered with public sector to deliver specific technical capacity

• **About this group:** Companies with unique expertise called upon for public health emergencies – e.g. logistics, R&D, telecommunications, data, financing
  • Motivated by *business mandate* and *corporate social responsibility*
  • Work closely with public sector partners

• Some groups already organized into **UN clusters** (e.g. logistics, telecom), **others more informal or adhoc** (e.g. R&D, data)

• **Two key determinants of speed and effectiveness in Ebola response:**
  • Degree of organization ahead of crisis
  • Extent of regulatory, financing and other constraints

• **Future models:** pre-established, topic specific public private collaborations critical to allow for sufficient preparation in advance of next crisis

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**Recommendation:** Build on existing clusters and create select additional partnerships (e.g. R&D, data analysis, finance)
Greater private sector contributors responded primarily through donations, either cash or in-kind

- **About this group:** Diverse group of companies outside the affected area. Driven primarily by a corporate social responsibility mission

- **Primary method of engaging with response is via donation of funds or goods;** may offer expertise or innovation

- **Interaction was less organized, with many ad-hoc bilateral arrangements**
  - Most effective leveraged known partners
  - Others did not know where/how to donate or donated unnecessary/unhelpful supplies

- **Future models:** Need a public agency to act as liaison for private sector donations; to provide guidelines, activate a communications center, and maintain a short list of most needed goods and services

**Recommendation:** Create a clear point of contact for greater private sector to improve information flow, establish clear processes
Path forward: WEF planning to focus next phase on in-country operators

• **Role:** As the international institution for public-private cooperation, the World Economic Forum is well positioned to **mobilize in-country operators** and **facilitate dialogue with Ministries of Health and relevant international organizations** to support the local implementation of private sector networks as part of national preparedness and response schemes.

• **Proposed approach:** Desk-based preparation, global expert interviews, and **extensive in-country consultations** to establish a national coordination mechanism in two or three African countries.

• **Desired outcomes:**
  - **Local networks** of private stakeholders, NGOs, international organizations and Ministries of Health connected to a common communication platform for optimized preparedness and response strategies.
  - Country level "playbooks" in two or three African nations to support the mobilization and coordination of the private sector in response to national public priorities in a health emergency.
  - Development of a **framework for replicating** local networks based on country case studies.
  - Facilitate **high level dialogue** at the Annual Meeting in Davos 2016 to evaluate future actions for the broader global agenda.

**Note:** No additional efforts planned at this time by WEF to address remaining two segments of private sector.