

Munich Security Conference Feb. 18, 2022

Video link <https://youtu.be/U70Q9WqbMFM>

Hadley Gamble – Anchor and reporter, CNBC

Bill Gates – Co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Comfort Ero – CEO of the International Crisis Group

Melanie Joly – Foreign minister of Canada

Anna Linde – Minister of foreign affairs, Sweden

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus – Director-General of the World Health Organization

Transcript

Hadley Gamble

So the title of course of this session is get well soon finding a way out of the global pandemic. I'd like to welcome all of our panelists. Her Excellency, the Foreign Minister of Canada, Melanie Joly. Her Excellency Anna Lund, the Minister of Foreign Affairs from Sweden. Comfort Ero, the CEO of the International Crisis Group, and Bill Gates, the Co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Now Doctor Tedros will be joining us a little bit later on in the program, he's been held up. He's on his way from Brussels and as soon as he gets here, we'll go to him for a few minutes. But I wanted to kick off actually, and get a bit of a scene center from Mr. Gates because this is I know, a topic that you've spoken on again and again you were ahead of the curve prior to the beginning of this pandemic. Where would you assess where we are today in beating COVID-19?

Bill Gates

Well, the, uh, you know, sadly the virus itself particularly the, the variant called Omicron is a type of vaccine. That is, it creates both B cell and T cell immunity and it's done a better job of getting out to the world population than we have with vaccines. If you do serious serosurveys in African countries, you get well over 80% of people have been exposed either to the vaccine or to various variants, and so you know what that does, is it means the chance of severe disease, which is mainly associated with being elderly and having obesity or diabetes, those risks are now dramatically reduced because of that infection exposure.

And you know, it's sad we didn't do a great job on therapeutics, you know, only here two years in, do we have a good therapeutic, vaccines. It took us two years to be an oversupply. Today there are more vaccines than there is demand for vaccines, and you know that wasn't true. And next time we should try and make it instead of two years, we should make it more like six months. Which certainly you know some of the standardized platform approaches, including mRNA, would allow us to do that, so, you know it took us a lot longer this time than than it should have.

Hadley Gamble

What's your greatest concern at this time in terms of combating COVID-19 and the potential for another pandemic? Are we going to see another pandemic before we are able to beat this one?

Bill Gates

Ya, we'll have another pandemic. It will be a different pathogen next time that we'll have some rebound. This this pathogen we don't have a tool to do eradication. We'd like to have a a new generation of vaccines that would be suitable. I mean, ideally, we'd get rid of families of respiratory viruses, including the flu family and the coronavirus family and I do think in the next decade we can

come up with an eradication vaccine. That's an aspiration, not a guarantee, but we should put R&D dollars into that. There's already a lot of work that's been done on a universal flu vaccine, and the data on that looks very promising. So we'll have rebounds, but they'll be more typical seasonal flu levels where, of course we don't generally shut things down. Although in the future some degree of mask wearing probably will be indicated, but we won't get death levels at, you know the kind of acute level that we're still experiencing today as the omicron wave passes through on a global basis.

Hadley Gamble

Comfort, weigh in for us on the danger level that we're seeing globally at this point in terms of the danger of this pandemic and its impact on society.

Comfort Ero

Thank you. If you can hear me through the through the mic. We've tended to see, or there's a tendency to see it as strictly a public health issue, but what we've witnessed also since the the emergence of the pandemic is that it has both a political implications, social implications, and security implications. We've seen how COVID has exacerbated crises in a number of war torn or conflict affected countries, we've seen how COVID has had an impact on humanitarian fallout in already in countries that are already vulnerable. For example, in the Sahel in east, in East Africa, in the Horn of Africa, in Yemen, in Colombia, in Venezuela, we've seen countries that are already under strain, where you've seen already discontent against government. We've already seen stresses in those countries. We've seen the economic fallout from from COVID. But we've also seen a degree of resilience in certain communities as well, so the picture that was painted was that you know Africa would suffer the worst from it. That there would, that conflicts would increase, that there will be more stresses and more strains in a number of communities on the continent. But the content has also shown itself to be resilient as well. But we have seen that the sharp edge of COVID, we have seen the discontent, we have seen the grievances. We've also seen certain governments, certain leaders misuse COVID to put in place more stricter rules, more stringent rules to close the political space. We've seen some countries use it as a way to encroach further on the rule of law as well, so we've seen it play out. So again, while there's been a tendency to focus on the public health dimension of COVID, I think it's important to understand the the fallout, both in the humanitarian sphere, the economic sphere, political sphere, and what that is meant, particularly for countries, are already vulnerable on the eve of the pandemic as well.

Hadley Gamble

How disturbing is it to you that we see regimes like China and various other authoritarian governments taking advantage of the fact that they are able to control the populations to a much higher degree as a result of having access to their medical information and access to their movements via these apps and other devices that supposedly are keeping people safe but at the same time allow governments a backdoor into people's lives.

Comfort Ero

Yeah, and that's this is a point I was, I was saying that you we've seen certain government, and I wouldn't target one particular government, I think we've seen already in those in those societies where we've seen an authoritarian trend, or whether it's been an authoritarian drift. We've seen certain countries try to use it as an excuse, for example, to slow down elections, as an excuse for example, to go after the opposition, as an excuse, for example to use the police to clamp down on the movement of their societies as well. So it's particularly in those countries where you've already seen a standoff between their governments and society. Those countries where there's already deep distrust. But these aren't just countries where there's that are conflict ridden. This is countries where the government structures of those countries were already weak, already fragile and there was already contestation between governments and their and their society as well.

Hadley Gamble

You know, beyond just the most vulnerable countries, that's also happening in democracies in the West, most particularly in Canada. I know that they were arresting people in Ottawa who've been protesting vaccine mandates earlier today. Foreign minister, I'd love it if you would address that for us, because that's a deep concern to many in the West that it seems as if your Prime Minister does not have a handle on this situation.

Melanie Joly

Well, first and foremost, I think we can be proud of Canadians that have decided to get a vaccine and and we're now at a level of 80% for all the population of Canada, kids five years old and up. And also I think that it is, we're now starting the third year of the pandemic at the people are tired, exasperated, exasperated. In French, there's a saying where I come from in Canada, which we say people are tene, they're fed up. And you know it is a Nordic country, and January and February are harsh months. And so at this point, definitely the mental health of Canadians is something that I have in mind and that we have in mind.

Meanwhile, there's a right for peaceful process in in Canada. And, and we obviously want to make sure that that right is upheld, but we're past that at this point and our biggest concern, and my biggest concern as Foreign Affairs Minister, is the foreign interference that is happening in the convoy we're seeing in Canada right now. The disinformation campaign, where it comes from, the financing of it, where it comes from, and so we know that obviously there are Canadians that have gone and protested in a peaceful manner. But they're also with the truckers convoy, some elements that are extremely preoccupying and that led to also criminal charges, including particularly at the Coutts border between the US and Canada where there were criminal charges laid up and also arms that were seized.

Hadley Gamble

Do you believe that Donald Trump specifically has a role in what's happening in Canada?

Melanie Joly

Listen, as Foreign affairs minister, I won't point out somebody in particular, but we know that there is foreign interference and that's why also, we decided to go ahead and use for the first time in our country, The Emergencies Act, which is a important legislation and that at the same time gives yes authority to the government to act through its executive order. But at the same time, that needs support from parliament, and that provides also for a mandatory public hearing after its use, so we know that everything we're doing right now will be under the scrutiny of a public hearing. So based on that...

Hadley Gamble

Yeah, but these are major, major pieces of legislation under this emergency. I mean freezing the bank accounts of people who don't want to get vaccinated? That is a rather draconian step, no?

Melanie Joly

Well, it is people that have been, uh, uh parked in front of Ottawa parliament and going against basically the legislation and also, a lot of the bylaws. You know, as a parliamentarian in Canada and as a Minister, I don't have security, none of us have security. We don't need security usually in Canada, for every parliamentarian to go to Parliament for the last three weeks we have been escorted by the police to basically continue our work, which we were elected to do, and so this it's a national security threat. We took, the Prime Minister took this step very, very, very seriously and uh, and we're going ahead. But also there is strong support in Canada for going ahead because at the same time we need to make sure that

we deal with this national security issue, and more than that, we need to bring more appeasement to the country right now.

Hadley Gamble

Do you think this is your January 6th moment in a sense? [*referring to Jan. 6, 2021 attack on Capitol building in Washington DC*]

Melanie Joly

Um, no, because the posture of the government is not the same. Um, but at the same time it is clearly the first time that Canada is using this legislation, um, and this legislation was, has strong um, safeguards in it. Uh, the, you know, we're not using neither the uh, the, the Army, it is within the the the work of the police officers right now. And we said many times we agree with the the uh, the peaceful protests. But at the same time, residents in Ottawa in particular, need to be able to continue their lives. Shops need to be open again. Businesses have suffered from this and it is important that we continue to have a strong democracy and parliamentarians need to be able to do their work.

Hadley Gamble

Foreign Minister, I want to bring you in here because when we talk about Sweden, I mean the Foreign Minister, was just saying that Canada is a country that it's pretty far up there in terms of latitude. When you're talking about Sweden, though, you're also obviously a Nordic country, and you've taken a very different approach to COVID. You have decided to declare the pandemic over. That was partially economic, but also about mental health as well. Walk me through your strategy.

Anna Linde

Well, let me respond to that by making three overall reflections on this and it's it's clear since this is about a week, we have more or less taken away the the restrictions in Sweden. But I think it's important that we don't see this pandemic as an individual or social issue. It's also your political issue, it's a security issue. And we just see this pandemic as a tip of an iceberg. There is much more to come unfortunately. I mean, it's antibiotic resistance, it's all those climate related changes that will also affect human beings. Just a few days ago I presented the yearly declaration on foreign policy in the Swedish Parliament, and I actually appointed an ambassador to fight antibiotic resistance because there are so many people dying of this. Even if we are concentrating on COVID right now, this is nothing that is going to go away.

Also, these new political tensions are actually threatening public health, and that's why we as Foreign Minister also involved also in this discussion. There is also the issue of inequality, which means that it is crystal clear during the pandemic that the advantage, such as vaccine, has been very distributed in a very unequal way and we need to get it in another way to make progress possible for everybody. The health issue is connected across the world, that's what the pandemic has shown us. And inequalities and inequities has increased during the pandemic, pandemics and we witness a backsliding. Also, when it comes to gender equality, and both I and Melanie, we are representing government that has a feminist foreign policy and what we have done also is to see that women has been much more severely hurt by the consequences of the COVID, not COVID itself, but the consequences of COVID. So, we actually started to do, to bring this up, as in our female Foreign Minister network. We managed to get actually, a resolution through in the United Nation to see to this because the women are being, in those areas of society, has been hit the worst by the pandemic. Also part of our way of handling the pandemic has been not to have lockdowns. And in lockdowns, women has been both subjected to domestic violence in a, women say in an increase with 30%, and also those who have to homeschool their children. So it's not just COVID and pandemic, it is the consequences of the COVID pandemic that we have to deal with as well.

Hadley Gamble

Bill, I want you to weigh in on this specifically in terms of what we've seen over the last 24 hours, G20 Finance ministers meeting, and essentially trying to figure out how to balance the need for economies to get back on track post COVID need to combat inflation. What's your greatest concern there as economies begin to open up again?

Bill Gates

Well, the the greatest damage, uh, to the most low-income countries was the economic damage. You know the age structure of their population and variety of things meant from pure medical point of view, this is a rare disease that struck middle income and rich countries dramatically more than low income. Usually it's dramatically the other way, and you know, I think it's great when a disease like this, you know there's one small benefit to it, that it reminds people how inequitable global health is every single day. You know, there's 60 times difference in what's spent per person. There's you know, a 40 times difference in terms of the risk of a child dying. So we live in a very inequitable world. And in terms of how we take our limited resources and improve those inequities, I do think a dialogue with the countries involved would be important. You know, would they like to take resources and catch up on bed nets? Would they like to catch up on vaccinations? You know, what are their priorities? Given that they weren't able to go out and borrow money and support their economies like the rest of the world was, you know. What is that agenda? We're going to see, you know, an uptick in malaria deaths, an update tick in TB deaths, an uptick in HIV deaths. I mean, all of those things were negatively affected, and so it's, you know, great now we can have this dialogue. We've got some generosity that's coming from people, realizing that this affected the entire world. And you know, let's make sure we maximize that, and you know, spend it in the best way possible.

Hadley Gamble

Is inflation, in your view, the greatest danger at this point to the global economic recovery post-pandemic?

Bill Gates

Say again.

Hadley Gamble

Inflation, the biggest danger post pandemic?

Bill Gates

Well, you know African countries have, have inflation at all times. In the West, yes, we forgot about inflation, we don't have much of it, but it you know it's fairly extreme, uh, you know, we have commodity markets, particularly, you know maize and wheat with, um, spiking prices and so yes, you know I was in Pakistan yesterday and the biggest concern there is actually the inflation because in that food basket it affects the poor in in a pretty dramatic way. There's different factors for different, why different products or having inflation, um, but you know, whenever the rich world gets preoccupied with its own problems, there's a temptation to sort of forget about the suffering and the need to be generous to these other countries. And you know, will that happen this time or not? You know, partly, it's making sure that we, you know, bear witness to the difficulties that these countries have and you know, make sure that, you know, we do a better job than we did in the early stage of the epidemic.

Hadley Gamble

Comfort, when you think about what happens next with regard to the most vulnerable populations, obviously we have what's happening with the Ukraine-Russia crisis, you've got oil prices that have popped above 95 at different points in the last several days, inflation as we were just discussing is a big

concern as we try to move forward through a recovery process for post pandemic. How difficult do you believe is it going to be for vulnerable countries going forward to get the kind of assistance they need when it comes to funding, post pandemic?

Comfort Ero

I mean, yeah, and I want to pick up with your point, but also what you were saying about one of the issues that's been exposed as a result of the pandemic, or further exposed as the result of the pandemic, is unevenness and also the inequity of the international system, you know. And the other thing that was, I think it's been exposed as a lack of cooperation and unity in terms of being able to identify where those needs work very quickly as well. So today we have a situation where only 4%, for example, of the vaccines have reached those countries that have a high level of a humanitarian crisis as well. So, we talk about, you know, even as we talk about equity, and yet, when you look close to the ground, you still see that that the system itself is unable to make sure that it can guarantee access to those populations that are there at the front line of the greatest needs as well. So, I think one of the things that we, we talk about building back better, are we going to build back better the humanitarian system? Are we going to build back better to ensure that we we we we deal with those societies, or the most, at the frontline of the prices, and we're going to build back better in terms of multilateral cooperation? Because we also say, so at the time of an international global crisis, that the Security Council, for example, was at the most dysfunctional because of those major power tensions and we've seen how major power tensions has been overshadowed a lot of these crises as well. So, when we talk about build back better, it's it's become a catchall phrase. And it's become very flimsy on the ground where you, at the front line, where you see in a lot of these prices. Are you going to build back better in terms of public health systems in a number of these countries? One of the good outcomes from the Ebola crisis, for example, was the unity of the Security Council that enabled, um, regional organizations like the African Union, to benefit from consensus that led to the creation of CDC's around the African continent, for example, that allowed for a more sort of global policy on building public health systems as well. So when we talk about build back better we've got to be more specific, more concrete, and more clear in terms of what it means for a number of those countries that are vulnerable. Some of those countries are vulnerable are actually in Western democracies as well, and those have we seen just how fragile the distrust is between central governments and also the society in a lot of Western countries as well, and that, I think, is something that we need to also square the circle with going forward.

Hadley Gamble

I want to just do a quick round Robin with the panelists. I'm covering this from the very beginning as a journalist. You're reacting moment to moment. My actual last interview with Doctor Tedros, who will be joining us in a few minutes, was in Saudi Arabia on a humanitarian crisis panel and at the time markets were beginning to react to what we did or didn't know about what was coming and I asked him at the time, you know, are markets over-reacting and he said "yes, we haven't even declared it a pandemic yet", and of course, hindsight being what it is, and that was something quickly to have taken back off the table, but just walk us through, if the candidates would briefly, how much the media, and frankly disinformation, has hurt the world's ability, frankly, to deal with the pandemic?

Melanie Joly

Well, we are very, very concerned with, and I'm very concerned with the issue of disinformation and misinformation, to, when it comes to the pandemic, when it comes to our democracy, let's start with the pandemic. We know that vaccine hesitancy is linked also to the fact that there are social media campaigns that are spreading false information regarding the origin of the virus, its impacts, and also the you know, the impacts of vaccines. We see that throughout the world this is having an impact in democracies and in countries which have, and Comfort could talk more about that, but have had some

issues in terms of trusting their public health authorities, but this entire misinformation, disinformation campaigns are...

Hadley Gamble

It's understandable that they'd have a problem trusting their health authorities when you have Doctor Fauci giving new information every single day. Well, you know, no offense to him and his knowledge, but

Melanie Joly

No, but you know, we know that science evolves and you know definitely the idea was to make sure that we were following science. But when you don't trust your public health authorities, you put people's lives at risk. So, what we want to do as a country is we want to convene expert to find out what are these narratives? Who is behind them? How are they affecting communities? And what's the best way to counter them? And I think as a world we need to come to the table to find a solution, because it is for this pandemic and this crisis, but there will be other crises and we need to know how we can be more resilient to it, as every single of our citizens are on the web and became even more in a virtual reality during the pandemic.

Hadley Gamble

Bill, how well do you think the media has done at policing itself when getting the facts right? And did it damage the world's ability to fight this pandemic?

Bill Gates

Well, I think the mainstream media did a reasonably good job. You know, it's a little too bad that the death number that was published daily didn't say you know unvaccinated X percent, you know, vaccinated Y percent 'cause then people would have seen the, you know, phenomenal difference in terms of risk of dying being somebody who wasn't vaccinated. So you know, maybe next time we'll find a better way to get that message out. The scale of the misinformation once you move past the mainstream media, is so wild you almost have to laugh about it. I mean, you know Doctor, Fauci and I are just killing millions of people to make money, you know, hydroxychloroquine's this miracle cure that somehow he and I have masterminded avoiding people saving their lives by taking this thing. There's no doubt that the misinformation enhanced vaccine hesitancy and that maps to hundreds of thousands of deaths. There's no doubt that the idea that you know we need the freedom not to wear a mask, you know, and that that's some you know, thing that you've got to show that in many cases that led to spreading the disease into locations where elderly people had very high death rates and so, you know, as we look back over the pandemic, you know having the politicians speak out, that doesn't work very well, because then you have a lack of trust. The CDC in our country could have been more front and center Dr. Fauci became front and center, and you know the key messages about the vaccine is good, you should take it, and at some level masks are good [*last phrase was mumbled so can't be sure that is what was said*]. It's good, I don't think he ever confused anybody about the primary messages that saved lives.

Hadley Gamble

What about masks? I think there are a lot of people in America who are confused about whether they should be wearing a mask and in the United Kingdom, for example, they've scrapped that altogether.

Bill Gates

Well, that's interesting, you know what is the downside of wearing a mask? I mean it's got to be tough, you know you have to wear pants. I mean, this is tough stuff. These societies are so cruel. Why do they make you wear pants? I'm trying to figure it out.

Hadley Gamble

We're very glad you have yours on. *[laughing]*

Hadley Gamble

Morning Minister, weigh in on this in terms of Sweden specifically, do you think that the media helped or hurt your ability to fight the pandemic and to move out of it as quickly as you have.

Anna Linde

Can you repeat that?

Hadley Gamble

In terms of the media approach in your country. How did it help or hurt your ability to get back to business as usual, open up with media, yeah, misinformation, disinformation.

Anna Linde

With the media? Yeah, I think in the beginning there was a lot of a very strong opinions about what was good, what was bad, there was debate, anything, and I think it's very clear that the fact that we chose different ways that we didn't have, for example, masks more than in very, very specific circumstances. It's also because of the culture, do you have if you trust the authorities or not. And since we have quite a high level of trust between authorities and the citizens, we asked the citizens to take a lot of personal responsibility and to believe to use their common sense in a way and absolutely get vaccinated, that's the number one when the vaccine came, but of course there was a lot of disinformation also in in our society. Now when we see the kind of results of the excess death rates and so on, it shows that for example, Sweden, who got criticized in the beginning, there was so many things, I read, I had to answer so many questions for journalists all over the world. And we don't have, actually, we have, in fact one of the countries with less, with the smallest number of excess deaths, we have #5 and that means that you can choose different ways of fighting the pandemic that is suitable to your to your circumstances.

Hadley Gamble

Yeah, Comfort, in terms of the most vulnerable areas, as a journalist, I did multiple panels for the last couple of years, focusing on everything from the economic fallout to supply chain disruption and frankly, many on the idea that more needs to be done for the underprivileged areas for countries of low income for vaccine distribution, et cetera. But at the end of the day, how many people were really watching those panels? How many people, other than the organizations that were holding them like this one, my worry would be that the story of the most vulnerable countries was not being told to the degree in which it needed to be. Do you believe that the media has been helpful or more hurtful?

Comfort Ero

I mean again, as as I said, we've tended to look at the pandemic strictly within a political, I mean within a public health system. And the again, we've learned also over the last two years about the fallout and the consequences and understanding just how extensive those are. What I would, I think this is yet another panel that is trying to understand the post pandemic situation and how we how we reframe the conversations and how we do better coming out of the pandemic. There are conversations taking place. They, they're not often heard in these in these, in these centres, for example, one of the stories that is often not told is the role, for example, of the African Union and the role of its own chief of CDC and the conversations he had with African heads of states, lessons learned from the Ebola crisis. There are also conversations that are taking place in places like among communities in Colombia, in Venezuela, in Lebanon also as a result of the protest as a result of discontent as a result of those existing grievances.

So there are multiple conversations, and when you talk about issues around disinformation, I wouldn't limit it just to the media and I would also add the social media space where we are all our own media at the end of the day when it comes down to Twitter to WhatsApp, to Instagram, we all make up our own news at the end of the day in 240 characters, right. I can generate my own spin around the pandemic and that's it. So it plays a double edged sword as well But there are other groups that I think we need to focus our attention on. We need to also look at the power of faith groups as well that there can be a source of information source also of disinformation. We have to also look at various local community groups as well that are also source of information and a source of disinformation. And by the way, politicians also, decide what the news is and how you and how you then craft the message around pandemic. One day we're following the scientist, another day, we're not following the scientist. When it suits us we follow the science when it doesn't suit the public mood, when we're trying to win the battle in Parliament, it doesn't suit us to follow the scientists because the public mood suggests that we don't want to wear masks anymore, we don't want to be in lockdown anymore we want to get out, and because there are other political imperatives at stake as well. So I think again the pandemic has exposed a number of things that we knew were already uneven and unequal in a number of, a number of countries and not just vulnerable countries, but also in sort of what we define as strong democracies. We've seen just how fragile some of those societies are in terms of the trust within that with within their own communities as well.

Hadley Gamble

Bill, how confident are you that we as a global community will deal with the next pandemic better?

Bill Gates

Well, you know there were a lot of people in 2015 after the Ebola epidemic who were talking about what needed to be done. And in this pandemic, the countries that had some exposure to SARS-CoV-1 were amongst the outliers, you know. So, Australia is a true outlier. They orchestrated diagnostics. They executed quarantine policies and they have a death rate in a different league than the other rich countries. I mean, just utterly different. And everybody had the capability to do that. They you know, have less PCR machines than other rich countries, it wasn't some thing, they had more travelers coming in from China than other countries, so hopefully you know, given the so many negative things, not just the millions of deaths and the economic toll, but the lack of schooling, depression, overdose deaths, I mean, it's, you know, hard, hard to make the entire list, as you say. You know, for men more men died. For women more women had, you know, unacceptable burdens thrust onto them so the cost of being ready for the next pandemic is not super large, it's not like climate change where you know 10 trillion, 20 trillion. These are big numbers, you know. Global surveillance capability would cost like a billion a year. The R&D that we need to do to get magic vaccines and diagnostics and therapeutics, you know, that's less than 100 billion over the next decade. So, you know if we're rational, yes, the next time we'll catch it early and it won't go global like it did this time.

Melanie Joly

But I think also that we now have a better health security infrastructure than we did before the pandemic the accelerator of Covax are examples and I think also that many countries in the world know that we need to vaccinate more people in order to get out of the pandemic. And that's why we're stepping up to the plate. In Canada, we've, you know, provided 200 million vaccines, we've invested \$2.6 billion also in treatment and PPE, et cetera. But I think Bill, that was not ready before the pandemic We've worked together through our different multilateral institution, Comfort, you were referring to the African Union as well. I think that multilateral institutions worked during the pandemic. It's not perfect, but I think we're stronger than before.

Anna Linde

I think there is many weaknesses that was exposed, and I think that it maybe worked, but mostly it did not work because there were until everybody decided, now we have to put everything into the goal of getting a vaccine, then we managed to do it. That was, you know, for public private cooperation, for multilateral cooperation, for the big institutions, there are the EU other organizations like that and we get a vaccine in a in a in a period of time that was unseen. Nobody could expect us to do that. And that was, I think, one of the best things that happened. But it also explored the weaknesses of the multilateral organization and I hope, now that the Secretary General of United Nations, he is going to have a summit for the future and so to see how we can make it more robust because we cannot go on with these in inappropriate way of dealing with the multilateralism, absolutely not.

Hadley Gamble

In terms of reaching the goal, the WHO goal of vaccinating 70% of the global population by July of 2022. Show of hands on this stage. Do we think it's going to happen?

Bill Gates

To happen what?

Hadley Gamble

To get to vaccination of 70% of the population of the world?

Bill Gates

No, it's too late. Wait, I mean there's a lot of diseases out there that demand does not exist. For that I mean, countries should be able to set priorities.

Hadley Gamble

I'd love to open up the floor for questions at this point, and doctor Tadros has joined us and we'll be giving some closing remarks as soon as we're finished. If you have a question, I believe that we have a microphone that we can give you.

Question from audience

We had a tough time to manage COVID, but good news we have managed it. Initially we started vaccination much earlier than other countries, but then we made an arrangement. We paid for Astrazeneca from India. But India had a terrible situation, so they failed to provide the basic. Then we're looking for vaccine everywhere, and it was unfortunate for few weeks, almost six weeks, we had to abandon our vaccination program. Finally, Chinese came forward and we were lucky this they started providing vaccination at a cost, we have to pay for it. Finally, thanks to Covax, you see they started coming up. We need lot of vaccine, not less than 300 million vaccines. It's because we have around 165 million people, and since we need too much vaccines, you know, not to speak up, you know the booster first, you know, and 2nd vaccine. We need a lot, but we face this difficulty. Until today we got assurance from some of the country's, friendly countries, they would be providing some vaccine for around 1.1 million. You know, displaced people, persecuted people of Myanmar who are currently staying in, but unfortunately that did not come yet. So we hope that those will flow in future. There is a during this pandemic we find there was a partial narrowness among many countries. They were not forthcoming with the vaccine, until of course, the Covax started giving thanks to the Covax [mumbling] General who arranged it. My question is, I have two part.

First question is, from the day one we wanted this vaccine should be a public good and the technology should be shared with the countries. Till today, many African countries don't have it. If the technology could be shared with that. We have the, you know, pharmaceutical expertise we could produce it, but

since this technology is not a public good and therefore, we cannot produce it, so we is it going to be because this was coming up in varieties of ways in variety of variants so, will it be allowed as a public good and the technology to be shared by the countries that can afford to do it?

Second part of course, and here is the Director general is here for my Rohingya. You see, they live in a very congested area. They need vaccine and it's not much, it's around, if you do 2 doses, is only 2 million vaccines we are providing from our own, but it's not enough because we have a large, but we bought plenty of vaccine on our own and thanks to Covax that we got some. So these are the two questions here. Thank you, thank you very.

Hadley Gamble

India I believe, Bangladesh.

Bill Gates

OK. Well, there's no doubt that given the risk factors of this disease, that vaccinating young people anywhere before we vaccinated, older people, or people with comorbidities was not a just thing to do. And you know, it's hard to get the vaccines allocated according to, you know that risk ordering, which would have been ideal. You know, because of the second source deal that we helped fund with serum and Astra Zeneca, India actually had vaccines in a lot of vaccines very early. And you know the rich countries had vaccines early, and so yes, in the future there's two solutions. One is to make sure that limited supply is allocated in a more rational way. And there's ways to do that. The second is to just have so much capacity that you can supply all of mankind 2 doses in a very short period of time. And given this, how easy it is to build very high volume mRNA vaccines, I see the second is more likely and you can use mix, but the 2nd one, you know, being able within six months to make enough for the world. I think that should be our aspiration.

Hadley Gamble

Do you believe it's possible to prevent the next pandemic?

Bill Gates

Say again.

Hadley Gamble

Is it possible to prevent the next pandemic?

Bill Gates

Yes, if every country does what Australia did then you wouldn't be calling it a pandemic, uh, that's all.

Hadley Gamble

Foreign minister

Anna Linde

Yeah, I would say to your question about this that. I mean we have, I know the criticism that is in your question and the way we hear it often, but actually we have seen the fastest development of a safe and effective vaccine in in the history of mankind, and it has been the most significant scale up of global vaccine production, actually it's a tripling of the global outcome of vaccine and that is under the rules that we have now. And under the criticized trips, for example, that I know that that your country is talking about, and I think that if we waiver proposal that would not help because it will take away incentives for the vaccine producers to deliver the vaccine. But what we should do is of course that when we have the vaccine done in the way with the market economy so to speak, is to propose an even

harder Covax system, and that everybody takes the responsibility and that we increase the effectiveness of supporting all countries. I know it's more than 120 countries now that is not having the vaccine in a very high level, but to go that way of wavering or waivers or taking away trips or getting it getting not their producers to get what they want, what they need to have, I think that's the wrong way to go, actually.

Comfort Ero

Sorry, I think you know what I'm going to say. Here's the statistics. 12% of people have been vaccinated in Africa, 71% have been vaccinated in Europe. I mean, I think that is the stark reality, that is how uneven the processes as well. The one good story and I just saw your tweet this morning, Dr. Tedros, is that 6 countries in Africa for themselves have now received the technology. Up to now, begin to think through about their about vaccination on the continent as well. Again, it talks to the resilience of communities realizing that they're not necessarily going to get what they need, and that they can't rely on the traditional multilateral corporation which was damaged at the very beginning of COVID because of also, the other major power tensions as well, but I think we also need to look at the realities there. There really is a divide between what is happening. To answer the question, do we believe that people 70% of people will be vaccinated by 2023? No, and I'm glad that you said so, you're yourself, it's unrealistic because of this this crisis that we have within the system. And also, I think we should also be clear, the vaccine diplomacy using geopolitics as a bargaining chip to decide who gets vaccine vaccinated first, Oh well, because I'm not getting because we're not getting what we want from the West, Well then we can turn to Russia, we can turn to China because the bidding is at a very low low low low place, whereas there are lots of conditions tied even within the Covax initiative as well. So, I think if we're going to build back better, I think we really need to rethink the multilateral cooperation. And again, I think the public health systems exposed what we already knew about the weakness and the fragile, the fragility of that multilateral corporation.

Melanie Joly

Yeah, well you know and mentioned a bit earlier, the impacts of the pandemic on terms of social, political economy and Comfort mentioned it as well, I think that you know the pandemic has an impact on our public health systems and health systems in general, and we are not done dealing with that yet. Well, we're still vaccinating the world, so we have to also work on the resiliency of health systems in Bangladesh and other countries. Because meanwhile there are people on the waiting list that are trying to get surgery and don't necessarily have a spot in the hospital where you, we're going through this in Canada and in many countries, but we know we have to do that, as well in different countries of the world.

Hadley Gamble

Panelists I'm afraid we're going to actually have to wrap it up, but Doctor Tedros is going to offer his assessment of where we are today, I believe, in the next 5 minutes.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

Thank you very much. First of all, I would like to apologize. I'm very late. It took us one hour to get into Munich from Brussels, almost same time from the airport here, we were stuck in a tunnel. I'm really sorry but I have to apologize. But I'm glad you were with great panelists.

Excellencies, colleagues, friends. Guten abend, and good evening and my thanks to Ambassador Ischinger and his team for bringing us together again. I'm sure when we met two years ago, when we were all coming to grips with the spread of this new virus, that none of us would have imagined we would now be entering the third year of the pandemic. So, when will it end? Is it ending now, some one of the major questions being asked? Indeed, high vaccine coverage in some countries combined with the

lower severity of Omicron is driving a dangerous narrative that the pandemic is over. But it's not. Not when 70,000 people a week are dying from a preventable and treatable disease. Not when 83% of the population of Africa is yet to receive a single dose of vaccine. Not when health systems continue to strain and crack under the caseload. Not when we have a highly transmissible virus circulating almost unchecked with too little surveillance to track its evolution. In fact, conditions are ideal for more transmissible, more dangerous variants to emerge. But we can end the pandemic as a global health emergency this year. We have the tools, we have the know-how. In particular, we're calling on all countries to fill the urgent financing gap of 16 billion U.S. dollars for the ACT accelerator to make vaccines, tests, treatments and PPE available everywhere. Compared with the costs of another year of economic turmoil, \$60 billion is frankly, peanuts and some finance ministers called it a rounding error to the money they're losing due to the pandemic. Ending this pandemic must remain our focus. At the same time, we must learn the lessons it's teaching us. As you know, there have been many reviews of the global response to this pandemic, with more than 200 recommendations. Taking those recommendations into account, last month [mumbling] executive board tasked me with developing a set of proposals on strengthening the global architecture for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response to be considered by all Member States at the World Health Assembly in May. In brief, I see three key pillars of that architecture.

First we need stronger governance. I think that has been raised. Instead of the confusion and incoherence that has fueled this pandemic, we need cooperation and collaboration in the face of common threats that can address the trust deficit that we have seen. At a special session of the World Health Assembly at the end of last year, WHO's 194 Member States agreed to negotiate a new legally binding instrument to set the rules of the game for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. WHO also supports the recommendations for a Heads of State Council to provide high level political leadership for rapid and coordinated action. In our view, such a Council must be anchored in the constitutional mandate of WHO to ensure political, strategic, and technical coherence.

Second, we need stronger systems and tools to prevent, detect, and respond rapidly to epidemics and pandemics. Already, WHO has taken steps to build some of these systems and tools, including the WHO hub for pandemic and epidemic intelligence in Berlin to enhance global surveillance through collaborative intelligence. We're piloting the WHO BIOHUB system, a new mechanism for countries to share novel biological materials. Several countries are now piloting the Universal Health Preparedness Review, a new peer review mechanism for enhancing national preparedness. We established the ACT accelerator which has given us valuable experience and insights into how to fast track equitable access to countermeasures and to strengthen capacities for local production of vaccines and other health products in low and middle income countries. We have established that WHO technology transfer hub in South Africa, which has now developed its own mRNA COVID-19 vaccine candidate. Today we announced the first six African countries to receive technology from the hub to produce their own mRNA vaccines, Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Tunisia. But above all, not only the systems and tools, the central point will be developing the workforce and that's why the WHO Academy we're building in Lyon, France.

And third, we need stronger financing. It's obvious that nationally and globally we need substantial resources for strengthening global health security. Our analysis estimates the needs at \$31 billion per year. We estimate that about \$20 billion could come from existing and projected domestic and international resources, leaving a gap of \$10 billion per year. To close the gap for the most essential functions such as surveillance, research and market shaping for counter measures, we support the idea of a new dedicated financing facility anchored in, and directed by, WHO constitutional mandate inclusive governance and technical expertise in and installed in the World Bank. Any efforts to strengthen the global health security architecture can only succeed if they also strengthen WHO's role at

its centre, rather than centering further mechanisms, creating further mechanisms that would only create further fragmentation and potentially leave the world, less safe. We especially appreciate Germany's leadership of the Member States working group on sustainable financing and we look forward to our continuing discussion with our Member States on ensuring WHO has the resources to meet the world expectations of it, as well as accountability for delivering against those expectations.

Let me return to the question I asked at the beginning. When will the pandemic end? It will end when we choose to end it, because ultimately, it's not a matter of chance. It's a matter of choice. I thank you and excuse me again, my apologies. For joining you late thank you.

Hadley Gamble

Dr. Tedros, one question. Bill says that we could potentially prevent another pandemic if we all act like Australia, do you agree?

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

It depends on our choices, of course, and how prepared we are, and we have been saying the world has not been prepared for a long time, and it was caught by surprise due to this pandemic. Still, I don't see that the world is prepared, and I worry because of that, because the investment we expect is not happening. So can a pandemic be prevented in a state like now? I don't think so.

Hadley Gamble

Thank you so much, Sir, thank you panelists.