



New Panel to Advocate for a Global Public Health Convention for the 21st Century

A renowned public health researcher with the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine has formed a new global panel of public health leaders working to strengthen the world's ability to prevent pandemics and respond to infectious disease outbreaks.

The group, called "Panel for a Global Health Convention" and officially launched on April 26, will work toward developing a global public health convention by bridging critical gaps in global public health architecture and policy frameworks.



José Szapocznik, Ph.D.



“It is an honor to act as head of the secretariat that is providing support to all panel activities for the next two years,” said José Szapocznik, Ph.D., professor and chair emeritus of the Miller School’s Department of Public Health Sciences, who will serve as secretariat of the panel. “We know what to do to avert pandemics, but there is still much work to do to mobilize the political will needed to accomplish a treaty that can move the world toward a pandemic-free future.”

Dr. Szapocznik was instrumental in forming the group of leaders after leading a study in 2020 on the characteristics for a global public health convention for the 21st century.

The panel, including heads of state, will advocate for the adoption of recommendations for new legally binding treaties or conventions. This would build hope and trust in the global community by ensuring timely cooperation, transparency, accountability, and compliance with agreed-upon rules among countries to effectively prepare, prevent, and respond to public health outbreaks, Dr. Szapocznik said.

In addition, the panel will advocate for financial support for preparedness and response for low- and middle-income countries willing to adhere to pandemic regulations as well as sanctions for any country that places itself and the rest of the world at risk.

The Panel for a Global Health Convention will be chaired by Dame Barbara Stocking, president of Murray Edwards College, Cambridge, former chief executive of Oxfam GB, and former chair of the World Health Organization’s Ebola Interim Assessment Panel. Members will also include:

- Jane Halton, P.S.M., officer of the Order of Australia,



chair of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, former president of the World Health Assembly, former secretary of the Australian Department of Finance, and former secretary of the Australian Department of Health.

- Laura Chinchilla Miranda, M.P.P., former president of Costa Rica, and former vice president and minister of justice in the Government of Costa Rica.
- Ricardo B. Leite, M.D., vice president of the Social Democratic Party Parliamentary Board, National Parliament of Portugal, and president and founder of UNITE Global Parliamentarians Network to End Infectious Diseases.
- Lawrence O. Gostin, J.D., university professor and founding O'Neill Chair in Global Health Law at Georgetown University, and director of the WHO Collaborating Center on National and Global Health Law.
- Jemilah Mahmood, M.D., FRCOG, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister on Public Health, Government of Malaysia; former undersecretary general, International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Society; and former chief, UN World Humanitarian Summit.

Angel Gurría, secretary general of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, will serve as an observer.

The panel's work will also be informed by an advisory group of global experts in a diverse range of disciplines, including public health, medicine, domestic and global health policy, journalism and economics.

They include:



- Carlos del Rio, National Academy of Medicine Foreign Secretary and infectious disease physician.
- Akua Sena Dansau, former Ghana member of parliament; minister of tourism, youth and sports, and women and children's affairs; and ambassador to Germany.
- Ricardo Baptista Leite, Portugal member of Parliament, founder of the Global Parliamentarians Network to End Infectious Diseases, and infectious disease physician.
- Laurie Garrett, global health and Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist.
- Maksut Kulzhanov, Kazakhstan founder School of Public Health and minister of health.
- Sandro Galea, dean of the Boston University School of Public Health.

Next Steps

"The Panel for a Global Health Convention will direct its activities toward reaching heads of state and senior decision makers across the world, with a focus on engaging relevant dialogues at the World Health Assembly, G20 and G7 summits, United Nations General Assemblies, and other multilateral forums," said Dr. Szapocznik.

The expertise of its members will be leveraged to inform country leaders about the steps that need to be taken to achieve lasting positive change in global pandemic preparedness and response, as well as build momentum toward the adoption of the global public health convention that by ensuring cooperation, transparency, accountability, and compliance can change the future.

For more information on the panel, please email secretariat@gphcpanel.org. Follow the panel on Twitter to stay



up to date. This work is funded by the AIDS Healthcare Foundation and its AHF Global Public Health Institute at UM.