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To Whom it May Concern:

The Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSAs) commends the World Bank on the development of a white paper outlining a proposal to establish a Financial Intermediary Fund (FIF) for pandemic preparedness and response (PPR). As physicians, scientists and other medical professionals who work in infectious diseases and who have served on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response in the U.S. and globally, we applaud multilateral efforts to mobilize and coordinate increased investments to strengthen core capacities needed to prevent and contain future pandemics. We agree that mobilizing external financing to strengthen PPR in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) is the collective responsibility of the international community, as infectious diseases know no borders. It is also of utmost importance that existing financing mechanisms for infectious diseases responses, including the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, remain strong and well-resourced. Efforts to strengthen PPR must not come at the expense of other infectious diseases responses.

As the FIF continues to be developed, we urge the World Bank and global leaders to consider the following recommendations to prioritize financing:

Public Health Capacities:

The FIF must elevate public health capacity building as the core tenet and primary focus of PPR financing, including strengthening surveillance, laboratory and diagnostics capacity, and training health care and community health workers, among other core capacities. Special focus must also be placed on training more field epidemiologists and strengthening local capacity to improve community-based surveillance and timeliness of disease detection. While the FIF must work to strengthen capacities globally, countries should be consulted individually when working to identify priorities and gaps in PPR as needs are different for every country. Specific examples include:

- Establishing regional centers for public health training so that every country has a skilled workforce to mount effective responses to outbreaks and health emergencies
- Addressing vaccine hesitancy and countering scientific misinformation, including communicating with and educating the general public on evidence-based medical and public health interventions



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- Establishing mechanisms to sustain effective public health responses in countries facing social, economic or political crises and counter emergence and re-emergence of infectious diseases during crisis situations, including:
 - Continued implementation of routine childhood vaccination programs
 - Provision of and rapid deployment of vaccines, diagnostics, therapeutics and other medical supplies during outbreaks
- Establishing an emergency reserve fund to rapidly provide surge funding to LMICs during health emergencies

Health Care Capacities:

- Expanding and ensuring equitable routine access to vaccines, rapid diagnostics and treatments for both children and adults
- Improving training for and ensuring implementation of basic infection prevention and control measures in all health care settings
- Expanding training and resources to ensure a skilled health care workforce to collaborate with public health on pandemic preparedness and response

Medical Supplies:

- Establishing mechanisms to ensure strong supply chains for adequate provision of medical countermeasures, personal protective equipment, etc.
- Strengthening manufacturing capacities in LMICs to generate more accessible and affordable vaccines, diagnostics, therapeutics, PPE and other medical supplies

Antimicrobial Resistance:

We urge the FIF to strengthen low- and middle-income country capacity to address antimicrobial-resistant threats during “peace time” and during health emergencies. The white paper does not include language on the need to address antimicrobial resistance (AMR), despite the World Health Organization’s designation of AMR as one of the top 10 global public health threats facing humanity. Financing from the FIF must contribute towards strengthening country-level capacity to prevent AMR, including:

- Implementing infection prevention and control (IPC) strategies, improving water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) strategies and training health care



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workers on IPC and WASH at all health care sites, including community health centers

- Scaling up antibiotic stewardship strategies at appropriate health care sites while ensuring access to and appropriate use of antibiotics in settings that historically have lacked access to needed antibiotics
- Strengthening diagnostics capacities and infrastructure in LMICs to correctly diagnose and treat infectious diseases and discourage the prescription of antibiotics without appropriate diagnosis
- Training health care providers on the appropriate use of antibiotics and educating the general public on the dangers of misuse and overuse
- Expanding access to adult and pediatric vaccines to reduce disease burden and contain antimicrobial resistance

As the FIF continues to be developed, we urge the World Bank to ensure LMICs and affected countries and communities are meaningfully included in continued discussions as well as the governance and implementation of the FIF once launched. To be effective and ensure equity, the FIF must implement an inclusive governance structure that prioritizes consultation with LMICs and empowers countries to engage in meaningful participation. We urge the World Bank to consider the following recommendations regarding governance and implementation of the FIF:

- Ensure countries have adequate capacity to develop successful proposals for funding, including proactive outreach and partnership with countries to identify gaps in pandemic preparedness and response and country- and community-specific interventions to address them, including organizing and deploying teams of experts from across public health disciplines to help countries with this work
- Ensure meaningful participation of public health, medical and scientific expert professionals in governance, whether on the governing board or technical advisory bodies to the governing board, including experts in infectious diseases, epidemiology, microbiology, diagnostics sciences, veterinary medicine and other relevant disciplines
- Ensure regular, scheduled replenishments for funding over ad hoc replenishments to ensure sustainable financing and continued prioritization of long-term capacity building

IDSAs appreciates the opportunity to provide recommendations for the FIF and stands ready to serve as a resource as efforts continue to establish this needed initiative.

Sincerely,



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