End of year message from Marie-Paule Kieny

2016 has been a busy year with the end of the Ebola emergency and the unexpected spread of the Zika virus. It was also the first full year of implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda, and the international community has been mobilising to adjust to the new agenda and map the way we can end poverty, protect the environment and (finally…) reach health for all. The WHO R&D Blueprint is another contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals: it aims to provide innovative products to the people who need them most – populations vulnerable to explosive outbreaks and epidemics in countries where health systems and access to essential care are often limited. The Blueprint has made enormous progress since its inception in May 2015. I invite you to view that progress through a new visual timeline that presents the high points of the last two years. I also take the opportunity to wish all our partners and friends a happy end to the year and a hopeful beginning to 2017. Finally, I wish to thank the R&D Blueprint team, many of whom have volunteered parts of their already busy schedules to advance the Blueprint work and provide this global good to the international community.

View Progress Timeline >

Taking the panic out of emergencies

Emergency preparedness was one of the hot topics of ICDRA 2016, the international conference of drug regulatory authorities that takes place every two years. Recounting their experiences of the West Africa Ebola epidemic, regulators who had been in the eye of the storm outlined the lessons they learned and sketched out some of the ways we can progress to be better prepared for the next epidemic. The message to their fellow regulators was: “It could be you in the hot seat next time!” Read more >

Global coordination of R&D preparedness and response
A meeting of experts from a broad range of public health and research and development (R&D) environments met at Chatham House, London, on 10 November, to define the principles of a Global Coordination Mechanism (GCM) for Research and Development to prevent and respond to epidemics. The primary role of a coordinating mechanism would be to address the global R&D agenda in a collaborative manner in order to ensure that identified R&D gaps are being effectively filled. Read more >

Progress in prioritizing diseases with epidemic potential

On 17-18 November 2016 WHO held an informal consultation to review its draft methodology for prioritizing diseases under its Research and Development Blueprint. The meeting brought together experts in human and animal health, epidemiology, applied mathematics and safety as well as relevant researchers and clinicians. The full methodology and associated tools will be used in the first quarter of 2017 to update the original priority list published in late 2015. Read more >

Multivalent vaccines for filoviruses

Aiming to provide long-term protection to high risk populations, WHO stresses that any multivalent filovirus vaccine should be clinically effective against Ebola Zaire, Ebola Sudan, and Marburg Viruses due to the fact that all three viruses have caused the largest number of outbreaks with fatalities. It is imperative that these vaccines be available for use before or during an outbreak. The finalized version of the Multivalent Vaccine Target Product Profile is now available. Read more >

Zika in vitro diagnostics (IVDs) accepted for procurement

During the Ebola epidemic WHO developed an Emergency Use Assessment and Listing (EUAL) procedure to accelerate the availability of experimental products needed in public health emergency situations. A first Zika IVD test was accepted in August, and a second product was added to the WHO list in November. The second IVD kit is designed to detect Zika, Dengue and Chikungunya infections. Both listed products have been assessed for quality, safety and performance. Read more >

Tackling mosquito-borne viruses
Mosquito-borne viruses are a serious public health threat and seem set to increase in the future. Many such diseases are under-researched and few tools exist to combat them - when they do, there are often production or supply vulnerabilities. A consultation held in October explored common research options to facilitate the development of single medical products able to address several of these diseases. This will help improve cost-effectiveness and save precious time between the declaration of a public health emergency and the availability of diagnostic tests, vaccines and other lifesaving treatments. Read more >

**Coming up**

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<td>&gt; Annual Review of priority diseases list</td>
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