

# ROLE OF NATIONAL LEADERS

## **HOW TO PREPARE FOR PANDEMIC INFLUENZA: ESSENTIAL ACTIONS FOR NATIONAL LEADERS TO CONSIDER**

Being prepared means taking steps to reduce the spread of the virus, minimize hospitalizations and deaths, maintain essential services such as food supply, water, fuel and electricity, and reduce panic. Here are key activities to consider:

### ***1: Review and update the national pandemic preparedness plan.***

Work with appropriate groups to review and update the national pandemic preparedness plan. Key partners can include the Ministries of Health, Education, Information, Local Government, Defense, and Interior; the national Disaster Management Office; and national NGOs such as the Red Cross. At the very least, the plan should provide pre-pandemic and rapid-response policies and plans for the following areas:

- Community health care
- Non-pharmaceutical interventions
- Food security and livelihoods
- Communication

(More information on each of these areas is provided in the following pages.)

### ***2: Initiate planning and training for community-based health care.***

Planning needs to include building the capability of both the health system and community health workers to care for the sick. Consider training midwives, health promoters, teachers, and members of unions or faith groups to help with community and household care during a pandemic. Review and adapt international guidelines and materials on influenza care. Adapt training materials on pandemic response and train a core group of master trainers who can be relied on to implement these trainings in the event of a pandemic.

### ***3: Help districts, local governments, NGOs and communities to plan.***

National-level organizations can provide assistance to district and local governments, NGOs and communities to:

- Develop their own preparedness plans and test them through simulations.
- Engage local partner organizations from both the private and public sectors to encourage them to participate. Include health workers, local businesses, members of police or emergency response organizations, NGOs, and local media outlets. Make sure they understand how to mobilize resources and respond quickly when a pandemic strikes.
- Develop training plans for community health workers to manage flu-related illnesses and complications.
- Encourage communities and households to learn as much as they can about pandemic influenza and what to do if they or their family members become sick.

#### **4: Prepare messages and materials to educate the public.**

It will be important to have materials ready to inform people what actions they can take in their households if an outbreak hits. These include messages on practicing good respiratory etiquette and hygiene, knowing how to care for sick family members at home, understanding how to prevent the spread of pandemic influenza, and being aware of social distancing measures that might help to slow the spread of the virus, such as closing schools and postponing public events.