

PANORAMA

Thematic portfolio



Strengthening preparedness
and resilience to emergencies



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PERSPECTIVES

DOSSIER

AROUND THE WORLD

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that infectious disease outbreaks – whether natural, accidental or deliberate – have the ability to paralyse the planet and cause unparalleled, whole-of-society impacts.

As the international community comes together to fight COVID-19, it must also heed the warning issued by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, that ‘the weaknesses and lack of preparedness exposed by this pandemic provide a window onto how a bioterrorist attack might unfold – and may increase its risks’ [1].

Bioterrorism and bio-weapons threats are daunting but not new. And therein lies the good news: as an international community we know how to meet them. For nearly two decades, **Canada’s Weapons Threat Reduction Program (WTRP)** and other members of the G7-led **Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction (GP)** have been working at the health–security interface to deliver capacity-building programmes and mitigate global biological threats.

We are pleased that the programming implemented by Canada and other members of the 31-country GP is currently supporting the global response to COVID-19. This includes a long-standing partnership between Canada’s WTRP and Ghana’s Veterinary Services Directorate, supported by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, which has paved the way for COVID-19 testing in Ghana [2].



An employee working on COVID-19 samples in Ghana (2020)

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) has played an instrumental role in enabling successes like this. For more than a decade, the OIE and GP have collaborated to strengthen global biosecurity. Together, we have worked to maintain global freedom from rinderpest [3], to convene global conferences on biological threat reduction [4], to protect countries from agro-terrorism [5] and to design more sustainable laboratories [6].

The veterinary and security sectors have accomplished much together, but much more remains to be done to achieve our common goal of preventing, detecting and responding to all manner of disease threats.

For more information, please visit the [Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction \(GP\) website](https://bulletin.woah.org/)

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PERSPECTIVES

► OPINIONS AND STRATEGIES

A global partnership to mitigate biological threats

SUMMARY

Threats posed by bioterrorism and biological weapons are very real. Collaboration at the animal–health–security interface can play a key role in mitigating all manner of biological threats, whether natural, accidental or deliberate in origin.

KEYWORDS

#biological threat reduction, #biological weapon, #Canada, #COVID-19, #emergency management, #emergency preparedness, #G7, #G8, #Ghana, #Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, #Kananaskis, #weapon of mass destruction, #World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

AUTHORS

[T. Smith](#), Weapons Threat Reduction Program, [Global Affairs Canada](#).

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12, rue de Prony - 75017 Paris, France
Tel.: +33 (0)1 44 15 18 88 - Fax: +33 (0)1 42 67 09 87 - oie@oie.int