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TIEMS High-Level Policy Forum (HLPF) Focus Topic

Ethical Issues in Pandemic Preparedness

Background

The High Level Policy Forum contributes to ASSET's goal to bring Science-in-Society (SiS) issues into epidemic and pandemic preparedness by "...identifying and discussing important policy issues and examining how they can be improved...". One of the key SiS issues addressed by ASSET is the incorporation of **ethical** considerations in pandemic preparations and response.

To assess the extent that ethics is currently considered in EU pandemic preparation and response, ASSET performed an [analysis](#) of national pandemic plans from 10 countries of the European Union/European Economic Area and Switzerland. The report concluded that the national plans "... showed little concern for ethical aspects and a lack of discussion on ethical issues in most pandemic plans from European countries, except for Switzerland, United Kingdom, Czech Republic, and France."

Discussion and Questions

We would like to now initiate a discussion within the HLPF, on the issue of incorporation of ethical considerations in pandemic preparation and response. We would like to start the discussion by asking each HLPF member to comment on the following questions/topics presented on the ASSET Community of Practice (CoP) website:

1. How have the following topics been addressed (or not addressed), in the pandemic plans associated with your nation or region?
 - a. Allocation of scarce resources, such as diagnostic laboratory testing, influenza vaccines, or antiviral drugs
 - b. Compulsory vaccination
 - c. Limiting personal freedom through isolation and quarantine
 - d. Use of human subjects in research
 - e. Other considerations?
2. Do you believe your current plans adequately address ethical issues? What changes do you believe should be made?
3. Would it be appropriate to incorporate international guidelines (e.g., the [WHO Checklist](#)) into national pandemic plans? What mechanism do you recommend to enable this?
4. Can you recommend other approaches to improve consideration of ethical issues in pandemic planning across the EU?