

## Press release

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Paris, September 13 2012

# The Institut Pasteur and WHO join forces against epidemics

**On Thursday September 13, in Geneva, the Institut Pasteur and the World Health Organisation (WHO) signed a cooperation agreement concerning the response to epidemics and worldwide health safety. Their aim is to help countries to strengthen their capacities for surveillance, detection and response in application of the International Health Regulations drawn up by WHO.**

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According to WHO "In the globalised world, diseases can spread far and wide via international travel and trade. A health crisis in one country can impact livelihoods and economies in many parts of the world. Such crises can result from emerging infections like Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), or a new human influenza pandemic."

In order to improve the management of the risk of the spread of epidemics, in 2007, WHO drew up the International Health Regulations (IHR). The IHR requires countries to report certain disease outbreaks and public health events to WHO. To that end, countries are required to strengthen their capacities for public health surveillance and response.

With the agreement signed on September 13 with WHO, the Institut Pasteur in Paris and the institutes of the Institut Pasteur International Network are going to place their skills and expertise at the service of countries, in particular those with limited resources, in order to help them to strengthen their capacities for reporting, analysing and responding.

The agreement also provides for the setting up of training programmes, especially in laboratory techniques and field epidemiology. The development of human resources is key to strengthening health initiatives.

An important section also concerns the surveillance and control of vectors and reservoirs for which the Institut Pasteur and the Institut Pasteur International Network will provide their technical expertise.

This International Network brings together 32 institutes from five continents, which are fully integrated into the countries' health systems. Situated mainly in pandemic areas or areas at risk, the institutes are key stakeholders in the fight against infectious diseases.

With eight WHO collaborating centres in Paris and ten others in the International Network, this Network is often on the frontline in epidemic emergency situations. Today, this network represents a unique and original model for international scientific cooperation, based on the development of skills at a local level in order to guarantee lasting actions.

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### Contacts

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