



**INTERACTION
COUNCIL**

Established in 1983

InterAction Council

32nd Annual Plenary Meeting

Final Communiqué

**2-5 June 2015
Newport, Wales**

The InterAction Council met at the Celtic Manor Resort in Newport, Wales for its 32nd Annual Plenary Meeting to discuss the present state of the world, global health emergencies and the Ukrainian crisis from 2nd to 5th June 2015.

The Council convened two High-Level Expert Group Meetings. The first, “Firmness and Dialogue: How Best to Respond to Russia’s Challenges in Ukraine, Europe, and the West” was chaired by InterAction Council Co-Chair Jean Chrétien on 20 April in Ottawa. The second, “Global Responses to Public Health Emergencies and Ensuring Global Health Security” was chaired by InterAction Council Co-Chair Olusegun Obasanjo on 1 June 2015 in Newport. On these themes the Council produced detailed papers with several recommendations, annexed to this Communiqué. This paper highlights only the issues and recommendations that were the most discussed by the Council at its Plenary Meeting.

This year, the Council was guided by enthusiastic youth from Cardiff who brought their ideas on the issues being discussed by the Council and also issues important to them such as climate change.

The Council wishes to commend the extremely courageous healthcare workers who put their lives at risk combating Ebola in West Africa. Its deepest sympathies are with the families and loved ones of the victims of Ebola.

Present State of the World

The global economy has grown stronger since the financial crisis beginning in 2008. But there are still many threats that may cause global recession. The financial sector remains challenged. Banking reforms are incomplete, and individuals, companies, and governments are all carrying relatively high levels of debt. In 2015, the U.S.A. has been an engine of positive growth, and moderate growth has returned to the EU. Though still positive, China’s superior growth rate retracted slightly. Brazil’s commodity-driven economy showed signs of slowing. Despite the modest upturn, youth unemployment remains extremely high. Income and wealth gaps between rich and poor have increased during this recovery. These trends have increased disaffection in political institutions around the world.

Concern over the economy is partially responsible for distrust in traditional political parties, and the political system itself. A perceived, or actual, political vacuum has been filled with nationalist, populist, and even racist far-right movements. In her State of the World address to the Council, the Baroness Margaret Jay of Paddington expressed her concern with the fragmentation of “The Disunited Kingdom,” evident in the electoral support of the U.K.

Independence Party and the growing independence movement in Scotland. Some of this discontent has been fuelled by suspicion of the free movement of people in the EU: as Baroness Jay told the Council, “I am sure this country’s international friends find it extraordinary that we continue to be so conflicted about our place in Europe, which of course, in turn affects our place in the wider world.”

The strains in the United Kingdom described by Baroness Jay are also taking place across Europe, where we can see a rise in discontent. As Mr. Konstantinos Simitis, the former Prime Minister of Greece, told the Council: “The tensions between the desire of people to express their opinion on how they are governed and the reality of how power is exercised has led to a crisis of confidence and will provoke a huge political crisis.” This has implications for the future of the EU. As an exercise in trade, stability, and democracy, its success or failure is not only key for the region, but for the whole world. Yet, because citizens do not feel that their economic wellbeing is at the forefront of policy-makers, they are seeking greater accountability. Elections may be won or lost on this issue. It is a very real possibility that member states may exit the EU.

Some of the movements distancing themselves from multilateralism enjoy support due to the powerful narratives they provide. These narratives can be dangerous in the wrong hands. People thrive where there is mutual understanding and respect. Therefore, the InterAction Council has always called for fair and informed discussions based on mutual respect.

Global threats and challenges require global solutions rooted in multilateral cooperation on an equal footing. Multilateral cooperation and robust international institutions seeking and finding common solutions to global threats and challenges is something the Council has always supported. Unilateral action usually results in limited impact. Former Jordanian Prime Minister Dr. Abdel Salam Majali, for example, told the Council that, “co-existence must be made, and made again, in every generation.” States, corporations, the media, and citizens must take their responsibilities seriously in caring for one another and the planet. Therefore the InterAction Council continues to recommend that its Universal Declaration for Human Responsibilities be adopted by the United Nations as a complement to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

In previous years, the InterAction Council has called for multilateral cooperation, effective international institutions, and a heightened sense of responsibility to address problems such as terrorism, nuclear non-proliferation, sectarianism, and water security. This approach

applies equally to the primary themes of this meeting: global health emergencies and the crisis in Ukraine.

Global Health Emergencies

The importance of multilateral cooperation and response has been evident recently in West Africa during the most devastating outbreak of Ebola that the world has ever seen. The effects of this epidemic were on such a large-scale that the UN Security Council considered the outbreak a threat to international peace and security.

We do not know when the next epidemic will hit, nor where. That is exactly why states must be better prepared. From the first detection of an outbreak, states must be ready for patient monitoring, administering safe burials, treating patients and people safely all the while providing access to basic healthcare and raising community awareness about the disease. This requires the creation of isolation units, training of staff, and acquiring personal protective equipment.

Raising the capacity and preparedness of states and the global community to manage health emergencies is the purpose of the International Health Regulations (IHR). They contain technical standards and requirements for states to be prepared to face health emergencies. It must be a priority for states to fully comply with the IHR and amend them to better fit our current challenges.

An epidemic can bring states to their knees by devastating lives and destroying economies. Decision-makers should be applauded when they sound early warnings of a health emergency, rather than trying to downplay a crisis because of its economic impact. Global health security must be the overriding priority. This year, world leaders have the opportunity to add global health to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Political priorities and promises become reality only if sufficiently funded and implemented effectively on the ground. States must therefore fund the World Health Organization (WHO), its projects, and create a USD\$100 million contingency fund. This would allow the WHO to respond to emergencies robustly and without delay. Beyond emergencies there is an urgent need to assist states in improving their health capacity so they can deliver basic care in an effective and equitable manner. To improve basic care and respond better to emergencies will require much greater investment, which should be funded through the Solidarity Tax on International Airfares.

Healthcare professionals from the developing world are often recruited to work in affluent countries, exacerbating problems in their home countries in the healthcare field. Those who recruit such individuals have the responsibility to provide health scholarships to students from the developing world in the same field to replenish human resources in the healthcare field.

In our interconnected world no state is immune from the devastating impact of epidemics – infectious and non-communicable diseases - be they humanitarian or financial. Global health security affects us all. When it comes to health, collective security begins with individual security. With a disease such as Ebola, one patient is already one too many. There are several infectious diseases for which there are no known vaccines; these have the potential to become epidemics with wide and destructible effects. Equally, we must be aware of the interconnectedness of human health with animal health and food security.

The InterAction Council was reminded of the volatility of public health during its annual plenary session by reports that South Korea is in the process of ordering a quarantine to contain an outbreak of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. States should commit to building sustainable health systems. States should also commit to epidemic preparedness by establishing isolation units, training staff, and creating and developing carefully maintained stockpiles of personal protective equipment appropriate for a variety of climates.
2. Realizing its importance in rapidly responding to health emergencies, the WHO should improve its governance and develop its human resources. To provide the additional resources needed for global health, states should affirm the important role of the WHO and fund it robustly, including a contingency fund for its emergency operations.
3. Since additional resources are necessary to fund global health security, every state should enact the Solidarity Tax on International Airfares, and when recruiting healthcare professionals from developing countries, match those recruitments with healthcare scholarships.

4. States must fully implement the International Health Regulations, and convene a review conference to update the IHR to ensure independence, rigorous assessment, transparency, and to create independent implementation panels.
5. The Sustainable Development Goals should be amended to include SDG18, focusing on health security formulated as, “Take appropriate action to reduce the vulnerability of people around the world to new, acute, or rapidly spreading risks to health, particularly those threatening to cross international borders.”
6. The world’s most deadly pathogens, for which there are no licensed human vaccines, should be targeted for investment and development. A largely publicly funded common manufacturing platform should be offered. Vaccine stockpiles should be maintained in affected regions.
7. In a crisis like Ebola we are all in this together. States and health authorities have the responsibility to provide easily understood information about the crisis. It is the responsibility of citizens to access this material and behave accordingly. As the InterAction Council’s Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities states, “it is time to talk about human responsibilities.”

The Crisis in Ukraine

Given the hopes for peace and development after the end of the Cold War it is tragic that as the InterAction Council met in Wales in June 2015 there is armed conflict in Ukraine. This conflict has caused catastrophic humanitarian and economic effects and threatens peace and security in the entire region. In the 21st century, Cold War-era rhetoric and behaviour is not appropriate for leaders and nations who truly seek to ensure the safety of their people.

It is not acceptable for the disputing parties to threaten one another with aggressive movements of military personnel and hardware. As of June 2015, there have been encroachments on airspace, troops are concentrated upon borders, and many rounds of artillery shells are fired each week. This is occurring in an atmosphere of bellicose rhetoric that persists even after a ceasefire has been brokered and agreed to by both sides. An essential pre-condition for the settlement of the dispute is to end provocations and intensify dialogue among all parties to the conflict. Therefore, given the importance of implementing the Minsk II Agreement and establishing the conditions for coexistence, the option of Ukraine joining NATO should be taken off the table at this time. To reduce tensions further, needless

provocations such as military encroachments on airspace threatening civilian aviation should cease.

Since 2013, everyone living in Ukraine has suffered physical and economic hardship. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that over 5,000 civilians have been killed in the crisis so far. Beyond the terrible human toll, Ukraine's economy has been in free fall, with the IMF forecasting a 9 per cent contraction this year. The conflict has also contributed to recession in Russia. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has forecast a 4.5 per cent contraction this year and a further 2 per cent drop in 2016, largely the result of sanctions, capital flight, and the falling price of oil.

It is in the interest of everyone – Russia, Ukraine, the European Union, and their partners throughout the world – to restore peace in this region and unlock the productivity, innovation, and opportunity that are presently stifled by conflict. A major influx of capital will be needed to reinvigorate the Ukrainian economy. Helping to rebuild Ukraine economically should be a global priority.

But foreign direct investment will not occur if armed conflict continues. Therefore, it is essential that the disputing parties implement an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire. Moreover, in February 2015, leaders from Germany, France, Ukraine, and Russia negotiated the Minsk II Agreement in Belarus. But the agreement has yet to be fully implemented and the ceasefire is broken continuously. A crucial first step is adhering to that which has been previously agreed. In order for the Minsk II Agreement to be fully implemented, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) must be allowed to fulfil its role and its observers must be given access to the entire conflict zone.

To achieve these aims requires partnerships, the guiding hand of multilateral organizations, and a strengthening of supra-national infrastructure. Peace in Europe will only result from collective action. International organizations like the EU, the EBRD, and the OSCE can provide much needed coordination and resources and civil society groups like the InterAction Council can use their influence to promote dialogue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

8. The territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine has been breached. This is a threat to international peace and security and requires international action.

9. It is urgent that the signatory parties implement the Minsk II Agreement immediately and fulfil all of their obligations described in the settlement's thirteen provisions.
10. The OSCE must be allowed to fulfil its role and be given access to the entire conflict zone, based on its mandate, so that it can properly monitor compliance.
11. Ukraine's economy is in serious difficulty. Ukraine should receive a major influx of capital to reinvigorate its economy after the shocks it has endured since 2013. A start has been through the 2014 Ukraine-EU Association Agreement alongside the World Bank and the IMF, but there should be at the minimum a 100 per cent increase of current investment commitments.
12. Engagement between the disputing parties and their global partners should be in good faith with the goal of assisting Russia and Ukraine to engage in the normal relations of peaceful European states.
13. With the necessity of implementing the Minsk II agreement and resolving the conflict, for now, the option of Ukraine joining NATO should be taken off the table.
14. To reduce tensions, it is advisable that militaries not test the patience of their neighbours or other countries by flying too close to borders and by turning off equipment designed to ensure air safety. An accident or incident would have terrible repercussions.
15. The commitment of Ukraine to language rights should be applauded and dialogue should ensue on how best to promote decentralization, protect language and cultural rights, and respond to regional differences.
16. A Co-Chairman of the InterAction Council, Mr Jean Chrétien, has been invited to assist in the important task of creating a new Constitution for Ukraine. Members of the InterAction Council will bring their expertise to bear on this important priority and other civil society organizations should also be encouraged to make their own unique contributions.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

32nd Annual Plenary Meeting

2-5 June 2015

The Celtic Manor Resort, Wales, United Kingdom

InterAction Council Members

1. The Rt. Hon. Jean **Chrétien**, Co-Chairman (former Prime Minister), Canada
2. H.E. Dr. Franz **Vranitzky**, Co-Chairman (former Chancellor), Austria
3. H.E. Mr. Bertie **Ahern** (former Prime Minister), Ireland
4. H.E. Tun Abdullah Ahmad **Badawi** (former Prime Minister), Malaysia
5. The Rt. Hon. James **Bolger** (former Prime Minister), New Zealand
6. H.E. Mr. Fernando **de la Rúa** (former President), Argentina
7. H.E. Dr. Abdel Salam **Majali** (former Prime Minister), Jordan
8. The Rt. Hon. Sir James **Mitchell** (former Prime Minister), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
9. H.E. Mr. Benjamin **Mkapa** (former President), Tanzania
10. H.E. Mr. Olusegun **Obasanjo** (former President), Nigeria
11. H.E. Mr. Andrés **Pastrana** (former President), Colombia
12. H.E. Mr. Konstantinos **Simitis** (former Prime Minister), Greece
13. H.E. Dr. George **Vassiliou** (former President), Cyprus
14. H.E. Dr. Vaira **Vīķe-Freiberga** (former President), Latvia
15. H.E. Mr. Viktor **Yushchenko** (former President), Ukraine
16. H.E. Dr. Ernesto **Zedillo Ponce de León** (former President), Mexico
17. H.E. Mr. Viktor **Zubkov** (former Prime Minister), Russia

Secretary-General

18. Dr. Thomas **Axworthy**, Distinguished Senior Fellow, Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto (Canada)

Associate Members

19. The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Margaret **Jay** of Paddington, Former Leader of the House of Lords (U.K.)
20. Mr. Bill F. **Weld**, former Governor of Massachusetts (U.S.A.)

Special Guests

21. Prof. Michael **Adler**, Professor of Genitourinary Medicine/Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Royal Free and University College Medical School (U.K.)
22. Mr. Gordon **Ashworth**, Principal, Gordon Ashworth + Company (Canada)
23. Prof. Paul Arthur **Berkman**, Fulbright Distinguished Scholar and Research Professor, Marine Science Institute, University of California Santa Barbara (U.S.A.)
24. Ms. Jessica **Camburn**, Director, Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance (U.K.)
25. Prof. Onyebuchi **Chukwu**, Former Minister of Health (Nigeria)
26. Dr. Rainer **Engelhardt**, Assistant Deputy Minister/Chief Science Officer, Public Health Agency of Canada (Canada)
27. Mr. Nicholas **Fogg**, former Mayor of Marlborough (U.K.)
28. Prof. Simon **Gibson**, Chief Executive, Wesley Clover Corporation (U.K.)
29. Dr. Rebecca **Johnson**, Executive Director, Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy (U.K.)

30. Dr. Joanne **Liu**, International President, Médecins Sans Frontières (Canada)
31. The Most Hon. Lord Michael **Lothian**, Member, House of Lords; Chairman, Global Strategy Forum (U.K.)
32. Mr. Samer **Majali**, Former CEO, Gulf Air (Jordan)
33. Dr. Sawsan Abdul Salam **Majali**, Secretary General, Jordanian Higher Population Council (Jordan)
34. Mr. Fouad **Makhzoumi**, Chairman, Future Group Holdings and Future Pipe Group (Lebanon)
35. Dr. Brian **McCloskey**, Director of Global Health, Public Health England (U.K.)
36. Mr. Stephen **Ostrowski**, Senior Counsellor for Strategy & Policy Coordination, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (U.S.A.)
37. Dr. John Wyn **Owen**, Chair, Health Protection Committee, Wales (U.K.)
38. Dr. Domitilla **Sagramoso**, Lecturer in Security and Development, Department of War Studies, King's College London (Italy)
39. Mr. Bob **Sandford**, IAC Senior Water Advisor; EPCOR Chair of the Canadian Partnership Initiative in support of the United Nations Water for Life Decade (Canada)
40. Dr. Alexander N. **Vylegzhanin**, Head of the Department of International Law, Moscow State Institute of International Relations (Russia)
41. Dr. Alexander **Zhebin**, Member, Russian Political Science Association (Russia)
42. Dr. Moneef **Zou'bi**, Director General, Islamic World Academy of Sciences (Jordan)