**World experts and funders set priorities for COVID-19 research**

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Leading health experts from around the world have been meeting at the World Health Organization’s Geneva headquarters to assess the current level of knowledge about the new COVID-19 disease, identify gaps and work together to accelerate and fund priority research needed to help stop this outbreak and prepare for any future outbreaks.

The 2-day forum was convened in line with the WHO R&D Blueprint – a strategy for developing drugs and vaccines before epidemics, and accelerating research and development while they are occurring.

“This outbreak is a test of solidarity -- political, financial and scientific. We need to come together to fight a common enemy that does not respect borders, ensure that we have the resources necessary to bring this outbreak to an end and bring our best science to the forefront to find shared answers to shared problems. Research is an integral part of the outbreak response,” said WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

The meeting brought together major research funders and over 300 scientists and researchers from a large variety of disciplines. They discussed all aspects of the outbreak and ways to control it including:

* the natural history of the virus, its transmission and diagnosis;
* symptoms and management of the disease caused by the virus;
* infection prevention and control, including best ways to protect health care workers;
* research and development for medicines and vaccines;
* and ethical considerations for research.

During the meeting, the scientists and researchers agreed on a set of global research priorities. They also outlined mechanisms for continuing scientific interactions and collaborations beyond the meeting which will be coordinated and facilitated by WHO. They worked with research funders to determine how necessary resources can be mobilized so that critical research can start immediately.

The deliberations will form the basis of a research and innovation roadmap charting all the research needed and this will be used by researchers and funders to accelerate the research response.