

One Health--Animal, Human and Ecosystem Health- Needs to Be On the World Economic Forum Agenda

Richard Seifman*

Technical Review Panel Member, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria Board Member, National Physicians Alliance, Washington, D.C, USA

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***Corresponding author:** Richard, Technical Review Panel Member, The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria Board Member, National Physicians Alliance, Washington, D.C, USA. E-mail: seifmanrichard@gmail.com

This is the time annually when the economic powerful and national leaders from many countries come to the World Economic forum in Davos, Switzerland. Their focus is on financing, dealing making, stock markets, and cross border trade and tariffs. In short, the focus is on what might be described as is said in the movie, Casablanca, "round up the usual suspects". Little or no attention is paid to the devastating effect of an epidemic or pandemic to economies, and far less mention to the origins of such infectious diseases and One Health.

Over the last four decades, the world has witnessed one to three newly emerging infectious diseases annually. Of infectious diseases in humans, the majority have their origin in animals, with more than 70 percent of emerging zoonotic infectious diseases coming from wildlife. Recent outbreaks, such as EVD, H7N9 avian influenza, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, Marburg virus, Nipah virus infection, bovine spongiform encephalopathy and HIV/AIDS provide abundant evidence of the catastrophic health and economic effects of emerging zoonotic diseases.

The World Bank estimates a global cost of \$3 trillion in the event of a severe global pandemic such as the 1918 Spanish flu, with its unimaginable loss of life, economic activity, and decline in social contact (contagion avoidance). While technology and

modern safe guards make it unlikely that we will face outbreaks of the same magnitude, it is clear that emerging and re-emerging diseases at the human-animal-ecosystems interface are occurring with increased frequency. Further, the impact of such diseases outbreaks is most devastating to developing countries where their economies are often heavily dependent on agriculture and agricultural exports. In all countries, however, it is a shared responsibility of the veterinary and human health professionals, the wild life services, and others in the public sector, as well as communities. But there are essential and complementary roles for pastoralists, other livestock farmers, and communities, as well as the private sector.

There is certainly we live in an interdependent world underscoring the need to raise visibility and priority of a One Health approach to cope with potential infectious outbreak threats, recognize the economic consequences, and adequately have policies, and programs to fund preventive and preparedness measures, at the country, regional, and global levels. Next year, when the powerful return to the World Economic Forum, those preparing the agenda need to reserve a place for the in-depth discussion of the economic risks from epidemics and pandemics with a One Health focus.

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