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American Society for Microbiology combats global infectious threats

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A range of emerging and re-emerging infectious disease outbreaks over the past decade, from SARS in 2003 to Ebola in 2014, as well as the ongoing syndemic of HIV/AIDS and TB, highlight the importance of strengthening health systems for global health, international security and economic well-being. Both the International Health Regulations [IHR(2005)] and the more recent Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) launched in 2014 emphasize building and sustaining worldwide capacity to prevent, detect, and rapidly respond to disease outbreaks. GHSA accelerates IHR (2005) compliance and provides the framework to systematically address the spectrum of health security risks arising from naturally occurring outbreaks of infectious disease as well as accidental and intentional release of pathogens. Quality assured laboratory testing and functional public health laboratory networks are keys to a country's ability to detect and respond to emerging and re-emerging pathogens. The American Society for Microbiology (ASM) established a global laboratory strengthening program in 2006 to provide technical assistance, training, mentoring to peers in resource constrained countries to improve quality of laboratory services for improved patient care, reducing the burden of disease, and advance global health security. ASM's country-driven approach also fosters sustainable knowledge transfer networks, bolsters local professional organizations, and provides access to current scientific resources. Using its member network of more than 55,000 experts, ASM has implemented programs in more than 30 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean to address shared priorities. In cooperation with national and international partners, ASM support has enabled ministries of health and other sectors to prevent the emergence and spread of drug resistant organisms strengthen national laboratory systems to provide timely, reliable, and reported diagnostics, minimize the emergence and spread of emerging zoonotic diseases, and strengthen national biosafety/biosecurity systems. ASM is uniquely positioned at the intersection of science and public health to create sustainable solutions for health systems around the world. ASM's global network of experts offers countries the opportunity to advance the microbial sciences and strengthen health systems by raising awareness of health threats, increasing local expertise, and promoting a culture of responsibility.

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