

Correspondence

World Bank speeds Africa's COVID vaccination

Thomas Bollyky and colleagues suggest ways in which the World Bank could accelerate vaccination in Africa (see *Nature* **603**, 788–792; 2022). Such initiatives are in fact already under way.

Last year, the World Bank teamed up with the African Union, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and others to support the Africa Vaccine Acquisition Trust to help countries swiftly purchase and deploy vaccines for up to 400 million people (see go.nature.com/37w8je). Moreover, the World Bank has supported the Africa CDC since 2017, to combat epidemics and advance public-health priorities. This support helped the Africa CDC to play a crucial part in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic from the outset.

The private-sector arm of the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation, has increased its activities in Africa. It is helping to fund early-stage development of local manufacturing projects for vaccines and personal protective equipment. It is also contributing to existing vaccine facilities to build up domestic capabilities. Further funding will cover logistics, transport, distribution and cold storage.

The pandemic will not end until everyone in every country has access to vaccines. The World Bank Group is committed to supporting developing countries throughout the pandemic and to helping them towards a resilient and inclusive recovery.

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One Health: evaluation framework launched

The 'One Health' approach aims to balance and optimize the health of people, animals and ecosystems in a sustainable way (see go.nature.com/3j7w8re). However, a dearth of evaluation tools is hampering application of this initiative in shaping policies and practice.

As members of the Global One Health Index team of 38 researchers and an expert advisory committee, we have developed a framework for assessing One Health performance in guiding policymaking in local settings. We used the index to assess the One Health approach of more than 200 countries and territories to zoonotic-disease control, food security, climate-change mitigation and antimicrobial resistance (see X.-X. Zhang *et al.* Preprint at <https://doi.org/hq75>; 2022).

As well as helping to advance general understanding of the determinants and functions of a One Health approach, the results will enable the formulation of a realistic plan for implementing the principles globally and for promoting capacity building where it is needed.

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Revitalize China's cotton industry

China is the world's largest producer of cotton, but productivity is stalling. We identify three crop-breeding factors that could help to counteract this trend.

China's cotton production is being limited by its yield-directed breeding strategies. These have narrowed the genetic background and resulted in a dearth of early-maturing, disease-resistant and high-quality traits in modern cotton cultivars. There is no effective genetic transformation platform for developing elite genotypes (X. Du *et al.* *Nature Genet.* **50**, 796–802; 2018), hindering attempts to tap into their genomic profiles – for example, to improve fibre quality (S. He *et al.* *Nature Genet.* **53**, 916–924; 2021). And technical barriers are curtailing haploid breeding, which bypasses the repeated crossing and backcrossing of conventional breeding.

Extensive screening of seed germplasm resources, coupled with molecular-marker-assisted breeding, would promote desirable traits in new cotton varieties that are suitable for mechanized production (L. Fang *et al.* *Nature Genet.* **49**, 1089–1098; 2017). In addition, establishing an efficient cotton-transformation platform and a haploid breeding system would accelerate the generation of pure inbred lines with multiple desired traits.

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Arctic science diplomacy maintains Russia co-operation

Leaders of international Arctic-research organizations and Arctic Indigenous peoples' organizations, from Arctic and non-Arctic states – including Russia – contributed to three webinars held in February and March. These dialogues continued despite Russia's invasion of Ukraine, conveying the importance of open science (see go.nature.com/3jkkfpe) with both allies and adversaries for our shared survival as a globally interconnected civilization (see go.nature.com/3m9n1fq).

The webinar series was entitled Enhancing International Scientific Cooperation: Arctic Science and Technology Advice with Ministries (see go.nature.com/3jswed7). Funded by Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with logistic support from the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, it involved participants from 43 nations. After Russia's invasion, some representatives from European countries withdrew.

The discussions inspired international cooperation and common-interest building. Such informed decision-making operates across a continuum of urgencies, short- to long-term – from pandemic to climate timescales – for the sustainability of all (see go.nature.com/3rivds).

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