Hamish de Bretton-Gordon OBE RE(V) Bio Security Expert

- **Please give a brief description of your role and responsibilities?**

  Bio Security and CBRN Expert supporting government (US & UK) thinking and NGOs in the current COVID crisis and future resilience for Pandemics and biological attacks.

- **What do you see as the current policy and operational challenges you face in your day-to- day work?**

  Bio Security is the poor relation of the 'other' securities especially Cyber, for good reasons, as a pandemic or biological terror, appeared an unlikely threat especially on a global scale, until COVID struck. The US and UK must now prepare for the next pandemic or biological terror event to ensure physical and economic resilience. Like any threat, with the appropriate mitigation in place, up front, respective governments' can provide the required resilience to their people and economy. There is very little policy and strategies covering pandemics.

- **Please give a brief and concise summary of the current situation 'on-the-ground'?**

  A COVID type event is thought as a 1 in a 100-year event – this is probably now a false assumption. Perhaps compared to Spanish Flu at the beginning of last century, but did we just get away with MERS, SARS and EBOLA? Global connectivity, with millions 'usually' in the air at any one time means spread and transmission can be anywhere on the globe in 24 hours. There are now over 70 'level 4' biological containment facilities where the most potent pathogens are stored and worked on. This is a large increase over the last 30 years and is an Achilles heel which now requires much greater scrutiny, as part of the global Bio Security strategy.

  The terror threat must not be ignored, as biological weapons are the ultimate terror weapon and their massive impact if successful is what terror is about. The fear factor to the public is 10 as to 1, and passage of information especially to cover the anticipated tsunami of disinformation and propaganda will need to be the cornerstone to an effective strategy.

- **How can these challenges be overcome? Please provide two or three policy options. These may be options for donors, United Nations or for the governments under which you operate.**

Mitigation for Resilience

It is very difficult for politicians to take risk in such situations.

- **DATA –** Bio Security measures will require the collection, sharing, and securing of vast amounts of data. As we use this information to secure our future the confluence between biosecurity, economic growth and systemic financial stability cannot be understated.
- **Medical Countermeasure (MCM) development** – this is the silver bullet. Medical countermeasures (MCMs) are products such as biologics and pharmaceutical drugs that can protect from or treat the effects of a pandemic or biological attack.
- **Domestic production of MCM & PPE** – domestic supply and manufacture is clearly required – to rely on China for a greater percentage of PPE and MCM in future must be avoided.