

# TRAVEL AND TRADE RESTRICTIONS DURING OUTBREAKS

BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE ON THEIR EFFECTIVENESS, IMPACT AND  
PUBLIC HEALTH RELEVANCE

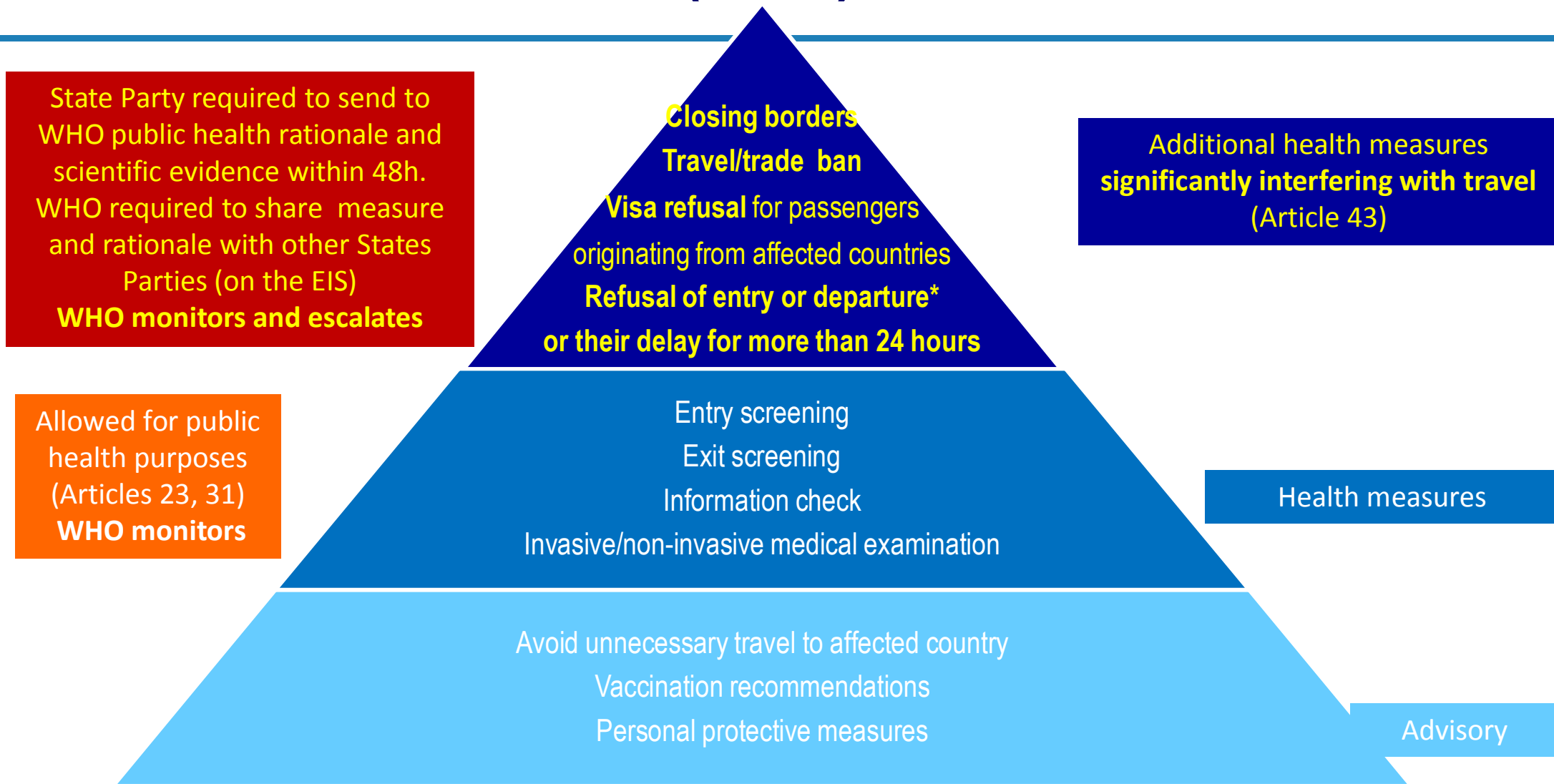
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# Additional health measures under the International Health Regulations (2005)

- Unjustified restrictions of travel or trade during outbreaks can have a massive economic impact on affected countries.
- Article 43 of the IHR: if States Parties implement health measures that **restrict international traffic**, they are **obliged to report to WHO the rationale** and public health justification **within 48h**.
- WHO is **required to share such information** with other States and **may ask** States to reconsider the measures.
- If measures are unjustified, WHO may escalate to national authorities, but there is **no enforcement mechanism under the IHR to ensure compliance** with requirements related to unjustified measures, only **peer pressure/moral obligation**.

# Travel measures during public health events under IHR (2005)

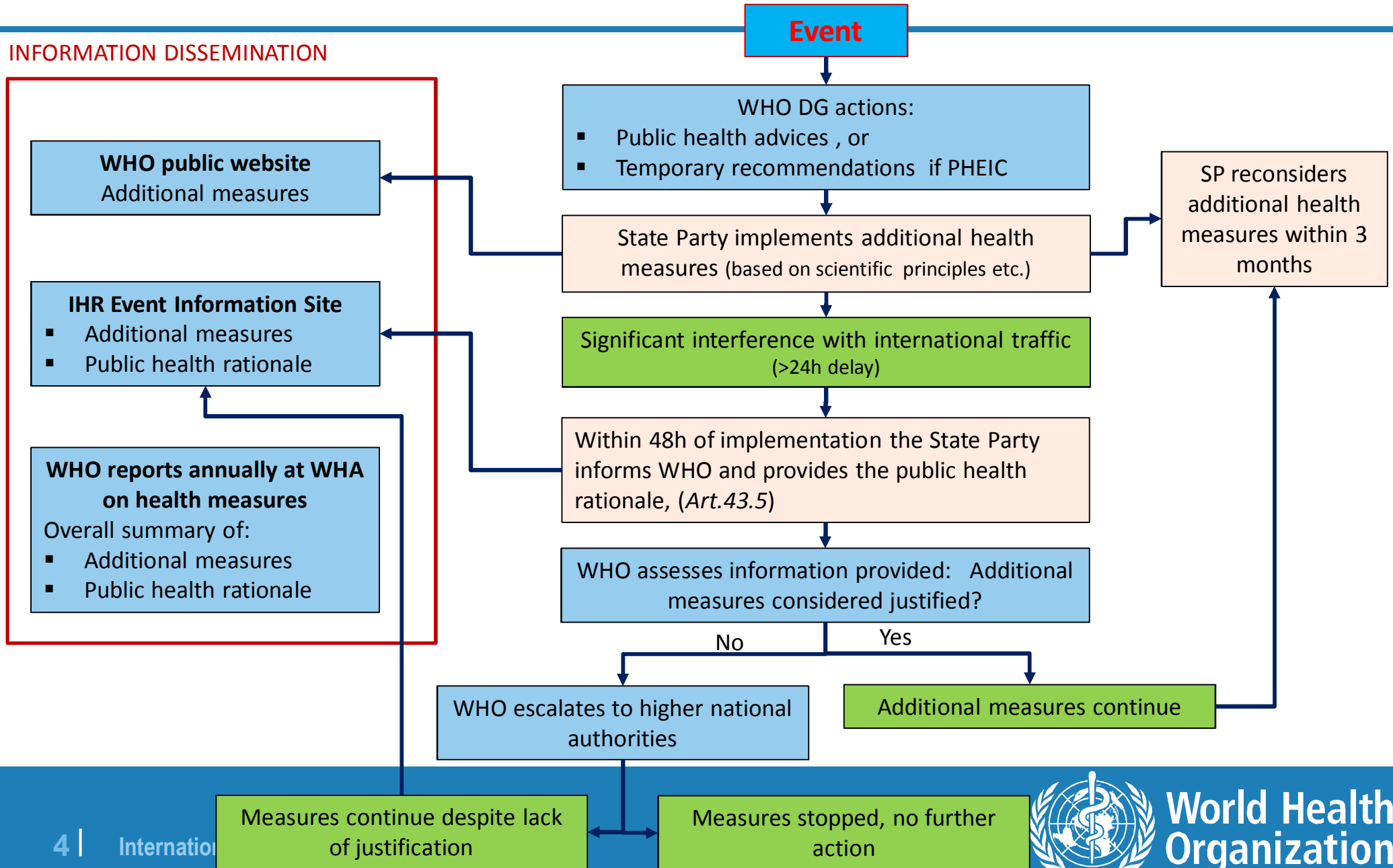


\* of international travellers, baggage, cargo, containers, conveyances, goods, and the like



# WHO monitoring of additional health measures under the IHR

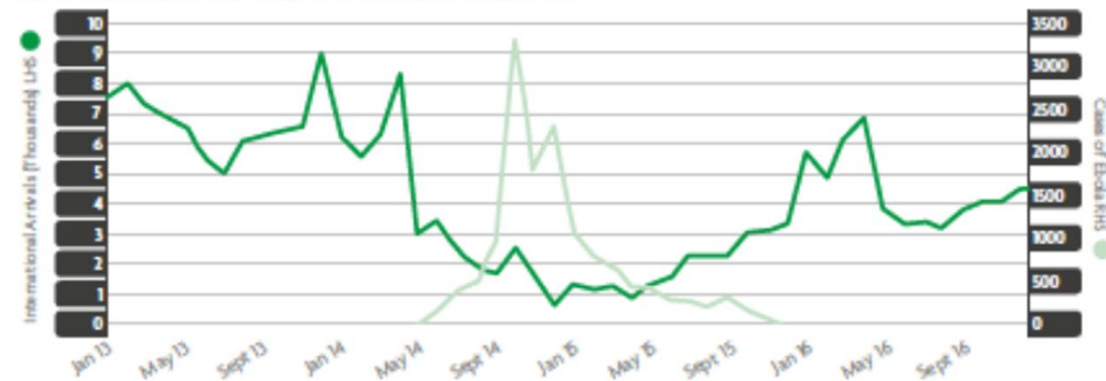
## INFORMATION DISSEMINATION



# Impact of additional health measures

- Harm national economies of affected countries
- Discourage countries from openly reporting outbreaks
- Do not delay much the international spread
- Create barriers for the response
- Impact travellers at personal level

Figure 2: Arrivals down 70% in first three months of 2014  
Sierra Leone: International tourism arrivals and Ebola cases

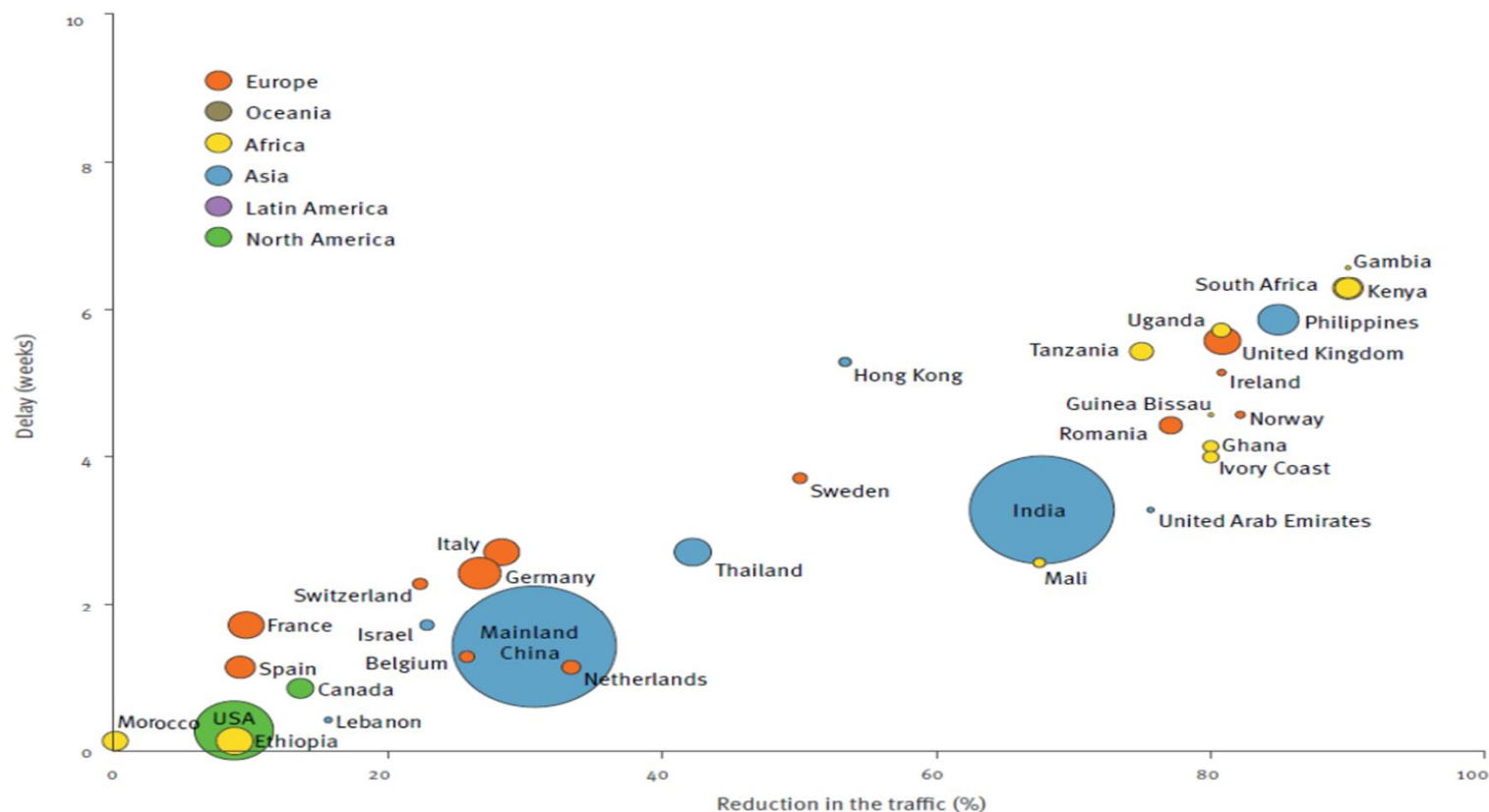


Source: UNWTO/Centre for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)

# Modelling the impact of flight restrictions

**FIGURE 1**

Modelled effect of travel restrictions on the risk of Ebola case importation for individual countries



**Flight stops do not actually delay much the international spread**

The delay in the risk of case importation induced by the applied travel restrictions is shown for each country versus the overall reduction of the country's air traffic. The delay was calculated as the time after which the risk of case importation in the scenario with travel restrictions was equal to the value reached on 30 September 2014 in the baseline case. For clarity, only countries having a non-negligible risk of importation ( $\geq 0.5\%$ ) are shown in the plot. The size of the dots is proportional to the country's population. Colours indicate the continents.

Source: Poletto C et al, Eurosurveillance 2014;19(42):20936

# Preventing international spread and protecting economies – plague outbreak, Madagascar, 2017 (1)

- **WHO advice for international travellers:**

- Published on 3 October - aligned with ECDC and CDC advisories
- Risk of international spread considered very low
- WHO does not recommend any restrictions to travel and trade

- **Emergency Committee (EC) under the IHR:**

- EC not called: based on the Secretariat's assessment, the event did not constitute a "public health emergency of international concern"

- **Exit screening protocol at international airport in Madagascar**

- Early October by national authorities
- WHO and GOARN partners (CDC, INVS) further strengthened the protocol



- WHO provided **support for preparedness and readiness for neighbouring countries and territories**

# Preventing international spread and protecting economies – plague outbreak, Madagascar, 2017 (2)

- **WHO actively tracking health measures related to international traffic**
  - Media signals
  - Regular communication with ICAO, IATA, IMO (International Maritime Organization)
  - Information included in sitreps for transparency and peer-pressure
- **Preparedness in neighbouring countries**
  - Draft Guidance note on IHR provisions related to international traffics shared with neighbouring countries
  - Increase awareness, preposition equipment's and supplies, contingency planning, and technical assistance
- ***AirSeychelles, stopped the flights to Madagascar, at the request of Public Health Authority, as of 8 October:***
  - *Rationale sent to WHO 3 weeks after the implementation of the measure*
    - *only suspension of travel considered (protection of the population and limited capacity of response)*
    - *other measures including isolation of passengers coming from Madagascar not addressed*
  - *WHO provided technical support to Seychelles for epidemiological surveillance and risk communication*



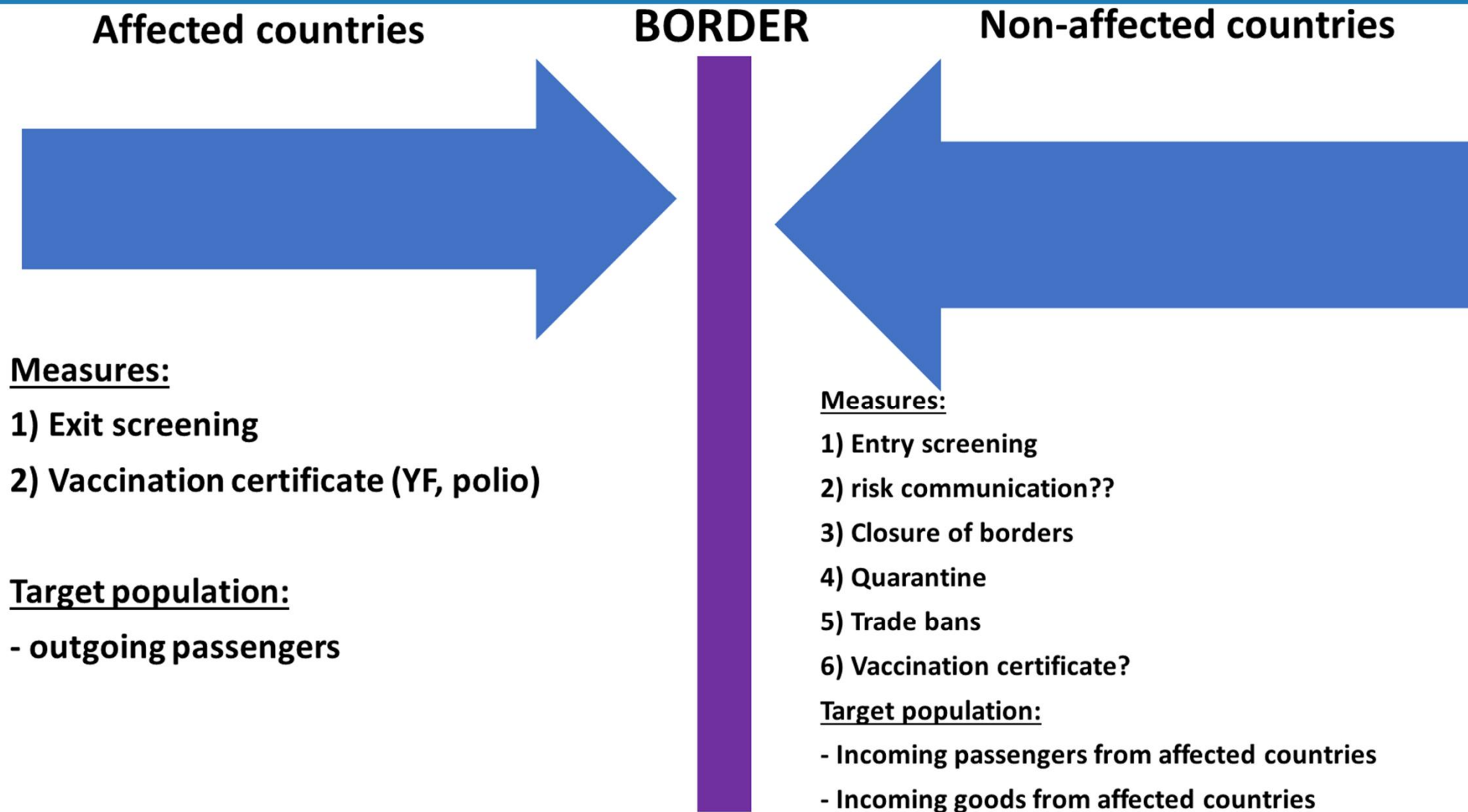
# Guidelines on effectiveness and impact of travel and trade restrictions

- Following WHO guidelines review process
- Internal Steering group
- External guidelines development group
- Develop PICO questions, identify or commission systematic review
- Formulate recommendations, taking into account benefits and harms, values and preferences

# Elements of the PICO questions

- **Target population for the intervention:** international travellers, local population (in both affected and receiving countries)
- **Interventions:** exit screening, entry screening, quarantine, closure of borders (visa refusal, denial of entry for more than 24h), trade bans
- **Comparison:** absence of the intervention
- **Outcomes:** detection of cases at border/prevention of international spread/ delay of international spread; economic impact, impact on tourism and trade.
- **Events:** contaminated goods, Cholera, Ebola (and other viral haemorrhagic fevers), Food-borne diseases, Influenza, Meningitis, MERS, Pneumonic Plague, Rift Valley Fever, SARS, Yellow fever, Zika.
- ***Out of scope for these guidelines: interventions governed by OIE standards***

# Draft analytical framework



# Guidelines development group meeting

## 9-10 May 2019, Tunis, Tunisia

### Objectives

- to **review the effectiveness of travel or trade restrictions** on the prevention of international spread of diseases.
- to **develop specific recommendations** on the relevance and justification of public health measures for:
  - preventing the exportation/importation of diseases via movement of people, vectors or goods
  - managing the risk perception of populations in non-affected areas, preventing thus economic losses and political concerns.

### Deliverables

- **repository of evidence-base on the effectiveness** of travel and trade restrictions on the prevention of international spread of diseases and **their economic and trade impact** (focus on VHF, selected air-borne and food-borne diseases)
- **evidence-based guidance** on the relevance and justification of public health measures at borders during outbreaks
- **research agenda** on the benefits and harms of travel and trade restrictions during outbreaks (including the role of modelling to inform decision-making on travel and trade restrictions)