The past two and a half decades have sprung upon the Southern African region – already heavily under stress – the cruel, unexpected and undeserved burden of HIV/AIDS. However, these are exciting times. The workshop heard of cutting-edge possibilities in immuno-nutrition and of viral research that enables everyone to know the enemy better. It learned of new antiretroviral drug development and (as important) innovation in delivery and compliance: the initiation of creative yet functional intervention programmes has also arrived. So – as is the mark of revolutionary moments in history: “It was the worst of times. It was the best of times”. In this regard, South Africans deploy great resources of social resilience, forged in the long hard years of apartheid and tempered by the healing qualities of reconciliation that underpin the achievements of the last decade. The leading edge of this first wave is thus occurring within a social experiment with significant implications for the global community. At the same time, South Africa is called to exercise regional leadership in the context of a deepening crisis of governance as the post-colonial state settlement unravels in many parts of tropical Africa. At this very moment, its own military instrument is fractured by the impact of HIV/AIDS, and thereby weakened. The pandemic therefore has both a formal, narrow security dimension and a broader, social security dimension – together they compose a truly formidable threat to global security for the foreseeable future.

The Mabula workshop sought to bring to bear the widely multidisciplinary expertise of those gathered within the spirit of the Pugwash Movement: to think in a new way in the face of new dangers to humanity. This report has sought to summarise the principal features of the way in which this new security agenda is unfolding. It ends with a summary account of main points, and a list of steps that workshop participants believe the Pugwash Movement should now take.