

The World Together: Establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating body to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness and response

The Second special session of the World Health Assembly,

Recalling resolution WHA74.7 and decision WHA74(16), and welcoming the report of the Member States Working Group on Strengthening WHO Preparedness and Response to Health Emergencies (WGPR),¹

Expressing appreciation for the ongoing work of the WGPR under resolution WHA 74.7, including to identify the tools to implement the recommendations that fall under the technical work of WHO and further develop proposals to strengthen the International Health Regulations (IHR (2005)) including potential targeted IHR (2005) amendments, and elements that may most effectively be addressed in other venues;

Acknowledging the need to address gaps in preventing, preparing for, and responding to health emergencies, including in development and distribution of, and unhindered, timely and equitable access to, medical countermeasures such as vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics, as well as strengthening health systems and their resilience with a view to achieving UHC;

Emphasizing the need for a comprehensive and coherent approach to strengthen the global health architecture, and recognizing the commitment of Member States to develop a new instrument for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response with a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, prioritizing the need for equity;

Stressing that Member States should guide their efforts to develop such an instrument by the principle of solidarity with all people and countries, that should frame practical actions to deal with both causes and consequences of pandemics and other health emergencies.

1. DECIDES:

(1) to establish, in accordance with Rule 41 of its Rules of Procedure, an intergovernmental negotiating body open to all Member States and Associate Members² (the “INB”) to draft and negotiate a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, with a view to adoption under Article 19, or under other provisions of the WHO Constitution as may be deemed appropriate by the INB;

¹ Document SSA2/3.

² And regional economic integration organizations as appropriate.

(2) that the first meeting of the INB shall be held no later than 1 March 2022, in order to elect two co-chairs, reflecting a balance of developed and developing countries, and four vice-chairs, one from each of the six WHO regions, and to define and agree on its working methods and timelines, consistent with this decision and based on the principles of inclusiveness, transparency, efficiency, Member State leadership and consensus;

(3) that as part of its working methods, the INB shall determine an inclusive Member State led process, to be facilitated by the co-chairs and vice-chairs, to first identify the substantive elements of the instrument and to then begin the development of a working draft to be presented, on the basis of progress achieved, for the consideration of the INB at its second meeting, to be held no later than 1 August 2022, at the end of which the INB will identify the provision of the WHO Constitution under which the instrument should be adopted in line with paragraph 1(1);

(4) that the process referred to in paragraph 1(3) should be informed by evidence and should take into account the discussions and outcomes of the Member States Working Group on Strengthening WHO Preparedness and Response to Health Emergencies, considering the need for coherence and complementarity between the process of developing the new instrument and the ongoing work under resolution WHA74.7, particularly with regard to implementation and strengthening of the IHR (2005);

(5) that the INB shall submit its outcome for consideration by the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly, with a progress report to the Seventy-sixth World Health Assembly;

2. REQUESTS the Director-General to support the INB by:

(1) convening its first meeting no later than 1 March 2022, and subsequent meetings at the request of the co-chairs as frequently as necessary;

(2) holding public hearings, in line with standard WHO practice, prior to the second meeting of the INB to inform its deliberations;

(3) facilitating the participation, to the extent the INB so decides, in accordance with relevant Rules of Procedure and resolutions and decisions of the Health Assembly, of representatives of organizations of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations with which WHO has established effective relations, Observers, representatives of non-State actors in official relations with WHO, and of other relevant stakeholders and experts as decided by the INB, recognizing the importance of broad engagement to ensure a successful outcome;

(4) providing the INB with the necessary services and facilities for the performance of its work, including complete, relevant and timely information and advice.

Fifth plenary meeting, 1 December 2021
SSA2/SR/5

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