

Interim Statement of the Intergovernmental Meeting on Pandemic Influenza Preparedness: Sharing of influenza viruses and access to vaccine and other benefits

Reaffirming resolution WHA60.28;

Stressing the critical importance of global public health;

Reaffirming obligations of States Parties under the International Health Regulations (2005);

In view of the threat of an influenza pandemic;

Acknowledging the importance of the international collaboration and collective action in risk assessment, timely sharing of viruses and specimens, the development and production of preventive and curative measures such as vaccine and antivirals as well as other measures to protect public health globally and in each Member State;

Acknowledging the urgent need for fair, transparent, equitable and effective international mechanisms aimed at ensuring access to H5N1 vaccine and fair and equitable sharing of benefits, in support of public health amongst Member States taking into consideration the needs of developing countries (resolution WHA60.28);

Acknowledging the fact there has been a breakdown of trust in this essential system of the international collaboration and collective action;

Acknowledging that the current system does not deliver the desired level of fairness, transparency and equity;

Pending the agreement by the World Health Assembly on a detailed framework for virus sharing and benefit sharing and as a demonstration of good will;

We agree to take urgent action to develop fair, transparent and equitable international mechanisms on virus sharing and benefit sharing.

We also agree on the following two immediate measures for delivering transparency:

Traceability mechanism

The Director-General will establish a technical and feasible system as soon as possible within WHO to track all shared H5N1 and other potentially pandemic human viruses and the parts thereof. A report on the progress of the implementation of the system will be provided to the Sixty-first World Health Assembly. Pending the functioning of such traceability mechanism, an interim system providing full disclosure of information on transfer and movement of virus shall be made operational immediately.

Advisory mechanism

The Director-General will establish an advisory mechanism to monitor, provide guidance to strengthen the functioning of the system and undertake necessary assessment of the trust-based system needed to protect public health. An advisory group will be appointed by the Director-General in consultation with Member States, based on equitable representation of the WHO regions and of affected countries.

Further, as a tangible demonstration of good will, we agree that viruses and samples are to be shared within the WHO system, consistent with national laws and regulations, while the detailed framework for virus sharing and benefit sharing continues to be developed.

The IGM decided that the Chair would convene an open-ended working group of the IGM and will ensure a balanced representation to further advance its work.

The group will meet in Geneva, the schedule to be decided by the Chair and Vice-Chairs.

The IGM will be re-convened to consider the work of the group.

We invite the Director-General within her existing mandates in particular with respect to resolution WHA60.28 to take forward the actions outlined in this Statement and we will support her in this endeavour.

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