

Report of the Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response

Meeting summary by Standing Committee members

1. The Director-General has the honour to transmit herewith to the Executive Board at its 159th session the report submitted by members of the Standing Committee on the eighth meeting of the Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (see Annex).

Action by the Executive Board

2. The Board is invited to note the report.

Annex

Report of the meeting

Meeting summary by the Standing Committee members

1. The eighth and final meeting of the Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (“the Standing Committee”) was held in a hybrid format on 14 and 15 April 2026. The Chair of the Standing Committee, Dr Alejandra Pizarro Ibáñez (Chile), presided over the meeting and welcomed members in her opening remarks. The meeting covered the following agenda items: item 1. Opening of the meeting; item 2. Adoption of the agenda; item 3. Update on the ongoing public health emergencies of international concern; and item 4. Strengthening and oversight of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme, and was then suspended. The resumed session was held on 7 May to address item 5. Report of the meeting and item 6. Closure of the meeting. The resumed session was presided over by the Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee Dr Pierre Somse (Central African Republic).
2. Dr Chikwe Ihekweazu (Executive Director, WHO Health Emergencies Programme) provided a virtual opening to the meeting through which he greeted the Standing Committee, thanking them for their important work since the Committee was established in 2022. Reflecting on key milestones over the past years, he noted that the future of global health relied on the strengthening of national and local capacities. He concluded by underlining the shared priority of carrying the momentum forward of strengthening country-level impact, deepening collaboration and ensuring that global commitments translated into action.
3. The Chair introduced the agenda, which was adopted.
4. The Secretariat provided a report¹ on the ongoing poliomyelitis public health emergency of international concern and delivered a presentation further elaborating on recent developments.
5. The Standing Committee thanked the Secretariat for the presentation and noted the report.
6. The Secretariat provided three reports in relation to the agenda item on strengthening and oversight of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme, including an update on strengthening health emergency prevention, preparedness, response and resilience,² a report on health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem,³ and an update on the response to major ongoing health emergencies.⁴ The Standing Committee noted the reports on the update on strengthening health emergency prevention, preparedness, response and resilience and the update on the response to major ongoing health emergencies.
7. In relation to the report on health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, Standing Committee members’ interventions expressed support for WHO’s humanitarian response and called for full observance of the ceasefire, as well as the upholding of international humanitarian law. The need to ensure sustained humanitarian access, access to

¹ Document EB/SCHEPPR/8/2.

² Document EB/SCHEPPR/8/3.

³ Document EB/SCHEPPR/8/4.

⁴ Document EB/SCHEPPR/8/5.

health services, scale-up of medical evacuations, as well as health system recovery and allocation of appropriate resources was also emphasized. Concerns were raised with respect to some of the references in the report, including the following: the last two sentences of paragraph 2 of the report; the aggregated framing of data since 7 October 2023; reference to coordination with relevant authorities without specifically naming them in paragraph 14; and the language regarding the ceasefire being “upheld by all parties” in paragraph 21. It was also recommended that such concerns from Member States be taken into consideration in all future reports by WHO on Palestine. The Committee noted the report, while noting the concerns referenced above.

8. The Standing Committee considered and adopted its meeting report. The meeting was closed.
