

Pandemic influenza preparedness: sharing of influenza viruses and access to vaccines and other benefits

Report by the Secretariat

1. The Intergovernmental Meeting on Pandemic Influenza Preparedness: Sharing of Influenza Viruses and Access to Vaccines and other Benefits, convened in response to resolution WHA60.28, met in Geneva in November 2007. After four days of discussion the Intergovernmental Meeting was suspended. It was decided that the Chair of the Meeting would convene an open-ended working group and ensure its balanced representation in order to further advance the work. The group would meet in Geneva, and the schedule would be decided by the Chair and Vice-Chairs. The Intergovernmental Meeting would be resumed to consider the work of the open-ended working group later in 2008. Member States would be informed of the date and venue of both the working group and the resumed Intergovernmental Meeting in due course.
2. The Intergovernmental Meeting considered a report summarizing actions taken and planned by the Secretariat in response to the request in resolution WHA60.28 to identify and propose, in close consultation with Member States, frameworks and mechanisms that aim to ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits.¹
3. A report on progress made before the suspension of the Meeting, including an interim statement and a consolidated outcome text, was submitted to the Executive Board at its 122nd session in January 2008.² The Board noted that report, in particular the interim statement.
4. At that session of the Board, the Secretariat provided an update on the implementation of the two immediate measures called for in the interim statement. Specifically, the Secretariat announced the launching of an interim traceability mechanism for all influenza A (H5N1) viruses submitted to the Global Influenza Surveillance Network. Through this mechanism, each A (H5N1) virus so submitted is assigned a unique identifier and data on it are stored in an electronic database. Data include the location of each virus, information on analyses that have been done on the virus, further use of the virus in the development of H5N1 vaccine viruses, and recipients of the vaccine viruses and other viruses. This Influenza Virus Tracking System is accessible on the WHO web site.³

¹ Document A/PIP/IGM/2 Rev.1.

² Document EB122/5.

³ http://www.who.int/fluvirus_tracker.

5. Regarding the advisory mechanism, the Director-General will, in consultation with Member States, appoint an advisory group based on equitable representation of WHO regions and affected countries.

ACTION BY THE HEALTH ASSEMBLY

6. The Health Assembly is invited to note this report.

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