

Implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005)

Report of the Review Committee on the Functioning of the International Health Regulations (2005) in relation to Pandemic (H1N1) 2009

Report by the Director-General

1. The Review Committee on the Functioning of the International Health Regulations (2005) in relation to Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 held its first meeting in April 2010 and its report had been noted by the Health Assembly in May 2010.¹ This report outlines the work done by the Review Committee during the period between May and November 2010.

2. Five technical subcommittees established at the first meeting continued their work between meetings of the Committee through teleconferences and electronic exchanges. In June 2010, an update on the intersessional activities by the Chair of the IHR Review Committee was published on the WHO web site.² The technical subcommittees identified stakeholders to be interviewed by the IHR Review Committee, including representatives of national authorities at senior administrative and technical levels, several of whom were National IHR Focal Points, representatives of international organizations, pharmaceutical and vaccine manufacturers, the media, and selected opinion leaders on WHO's actions during the pandemic.

3. During the second meeting of the Review Committee (Geneva, 30 June to 2 July 2010), some of the key stakeholders identified were interviewed in plenary session, including individuals from some of the countries most affected by the pandemic, especially in its initial stages, critics of WHO, and representatives of the private sector.³ The Review Committee also held a series of deliberative meetings in order to consolidate its progress to date and define the work still to be done, including, in particular, a discussion of the preliminary draft outline of its final report, which has to be submitted by the Director-General to the Sixty-fourth World Health Assembly in May 2011. Between July and September 2010, consultations were held to assign responsibilities for the structure and content of the

¹ Document WHA63/2010/REC/3, summary record of the first meeting of Committee A, section 3 and http://www.who.int/ihr/r_c_meeting_report_1_en.pdf.

² See "Note from the Chairman of the IHR Review Committee: Update on intersessional activities", available at http://www.who.int/ihr/review_committee_note_20100621/en/index.html.

³ See "Report of the Second Meeting of the Review Committee on the Functioning of the International Health Regulations (2005) in Relation to Pandemic (H1N1) 2009", available at http://www.who.int/ihr/2nd_meeting_report_20100716.pdf.

final report. The Committee's Chair, Vice-Chair and Rapporteur are supervising the writing of the report, to which all members are contributing.

4. The third meeting of the Review Committee was held in Geneva from 27 to 29 September 2010.¹ Testimony was again given by additional key stakeholders, in particular representatives of developing countries, regarding implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) and their experience in relation to the pandemic. The Review Committee also interviewed selected members of the Secretariat, led by the Director-General. She reiterated her commitment to supporting the work of the Committee, which she described as very rigorous and diligent.² With respect to the pandemic, the Director-General emphasized the importance of the International Health Regulations (2005) which, in her words, "brought a clear set of obligations, channels of communication and coordination and mutual accountability". The rest of the meeting was devoted to discussions of the structure and content of each chapter of the final report. Committee members also reviewed documentation of pandemic events.

5. The Committee continued its work in October through teleconferences and electronic exchanges, gathering evidence and discussing and drafting sections of the report.

6. From 3 to 5 November 2010, the Committee met in deliberative sessions and continued its work on the report, focusing on: the history of influenza A (H1N1) 2009; the background and context of previous emerging infections, the development of the International Health Regulations (2005) and pandemic preparedness; the first notifications of H1N1 virus and situation assessments; response, interventions and implementation of pandemic preparedness plans; analysis of the functions of the Regulations and their effectiveness; communications; and conclusions and recommendations.

7. The Review Committee agreed on a timeline and method of work for the coming months. A further deliberative meeting is planned for early January 2011. The Chair will present an oral progress report during the Board's session in January 2011. A fourth meeting of the Review Committee is scheduled for March or April 2011 before finalization of the report for submission to the Health Assembly in May 2011.

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

8. The Board is invited to note this report.

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¹ See "Report of the Third Meeting of the Review Committee on the Functioning of the International Health Regulations (2005) in Relation to Pandemic (H1N1) 2009", available at http://www.who.int/ihr/3rd_meeting_report_en.pdf.

² See "Opening intervention at the International Health Regulations Review Committee Geneva, Switzerland 28 September 2010 (External review of WHO's response to the H1N1 influenza pandemic)", available at http://www.who.int/dg/speeches/2010/ihr_review_20100928/en/index.html.