
Strengthening the International Health Regulations (2005): a process for their revision through potential amendment

The Executive Board, having considered the interim report of the Working Group on Strengthening WHO Preparedness and Response to Health Emergencies¹ and the report of the Director-General on strengthening WHO preparedness for and response to health emergencies;² recognizing the critical importance of the International Health Regulations (2005) in preventing, preparing for, and responding to health emergencies; underscoring the importance of States Parties' implementation of, and compliance with, the International Health Regulations (2005), including regarding collaboration and international cooperation, and development, maintenance and strengthening of core capacities; emphasizing the importance of solidarity and equitable access to, and distribution of, medical countermeasures in the context of health emergencies, as well as the importance of strengthening the health and care workforce and addressing access concerns; noting with concern the negative effects of discrimination, misinformation, disinformation and stigmatization on public health emergency prevention, preparedness and response, as well as unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade, and recognizing the need for strengthened coordination; noting the recommendations aimed at strengthening implementation of, compliance with, and modernization of the International Health Regulations (2005) from the main report of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response,³ the report of the Review Committee on the Functioning of the International Health Regulations (2005),⁴ the report of the Independent Oversight and Advisory Committee for the WHO Health Emergencies Programme,⁵ and the annual reports of the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board for 2019, 2020 and 2021,⁶ as well as recommendations from the Review Committee on the Role of the International Health Regulations (2005) in the Ebola Outbreak and Response,⁷ the Ebola Interim Assessment Panel,⁸ and the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Global Response

¹ Document EB150/16.

² Document EB150/15.

³ Document A74/INF./2.

⁴ Document A74/9 Add.1.

⁵ Document A74/16.

⁶ A world at risk: annual report on global preparedness for health emergencies. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019 (https://www.gpmb.org/docs/librariesprovider17/default-document-library/annual-reports/gpmb-2019-annualreport-en.pdf?sfvrsn=d1c9143c_30, accessed 26 January 2022); A world in disorder: Global Preparedness Monitoring Board annual report 2020. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020 (https://www.gpmb.org/docs/librariesprovider17/default-document-library/annual-reports/gpmb-2020-annualreport-en.pdf?sfvrsn=bd1b8933_36, accessed 26 January 2022); and From Worlds Apart to a World Prepared: Global Preparedness Monitoring Board report 2021. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021 (https://www.gpmb.org/docs/librariesprovider17/default-document-library/gpmb-annual-report-2021.pdf?sfvrsn=44d10dfa_9, accessed 26 January 2022).

⁷ Document A69/21.

⁸ Report of the Ebola Interim Assessment Panel (<https://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/ebola/report-by-panel.pdf>, accessed 26 January 2022).

to Health Crises;¹ bearing in mind the importance of ensuring coherence, complementarity and communication between different processes that will run in parallel, including the process for developing the new instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response and the ongoing work under resolution WHA74.7 (2021), and ensuring coordination between those processes in order to avoid creating an excessive burden on Member States; noting the urgent need to further strengthen implementation of, and compliance with, the International Health Regulations (2005), and mindful that Member States face challenges due to, inter alia, capacity constraints and insufficient global solidarity and collaboration,

Decided:

- (1) to note that the Working Group on Strengthening WHO Preparedness and Response to Health Emergencies will include, as part of its ongoing work, dedicated time to allow for discussions on strengthening of the International Health Regulations (2005), including through implementation, compliance and potential amendments;
- (2) to urge Member States² to take all appropriate measures to consider potential amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005), with the understanding that this would not lead to reopening the entire instrument for renegotiation. Such amendments should be limited in scope and address specific and clearly identified issues, challenges, including equity, technological or other developments, or gaps that could not effectively be addressed otherwise but are critical to supporting effective implementation and compliance of the International Health Regulations (2005), and their universal application for the protection of all people of the world from the international spread of disease in an equitable manner.

Sixth meeting, 26 January 2022
EB150/SR/6

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¹ Document A/70/723.

² And, where applicable, regional economic integration organizations.