

## **Update from the Co-Chairs of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response**

The Director-General has the honour to transmit to the Executive Board at its special session on the COVID-19 response the report submitted by the Co-Chairs of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (see Annex).

## ANNEX

### THE INDEPENDENT PANEL FOR PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

#### Report by the Co-Chairs

1. The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response was initiated by the WHO Director-General, and announced on 10 July 2020.<sup>1</sup> This is in accordance with Health Assembly resolution WHA73.1 (2020), which requested the WHO Director-General:

to initiate, at the earliest appropriate moment, and in consultation with Member States, a stepwise process of impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation, including using existing mechanisms, as appropriate, to review experience gained and lessons learned from the WHO-coordinated international health response to COVID-19 – including (i) the effectiveness of the mechanisms at WHO’s disposal; (ii) the functioning of the International Health Regulations (2005) and the status of implementation of the relevant recommendations of previous IHR Review Committees; (iii) WHO’s contribution to United Nations-wide efforts; and (iv) the actions of WHO and their timelines pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic – and to make recommendations to improve capacity for global pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response, including through strengthening, as appropriate, the WHO Health Emergencies Programme;

2. The WHO Director-General appointed the two Co-Chairs, former Prime Minister of New Zealand Helen Clark and former President of Liberia Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. The Co-Chairs were asked and mandated by the WHO Director-General to independently select and appoint the members of the Independent Panel. The Co-Chairs selected 11 Panel members, based on a long-list of names suggested by Member States as well as on additional names put forward.

3. The Co-Chairs made their final selections based on skills (including expertise in outbreak response, managing national health systems, leadership in community engagement, and socioeconomic analytical capabilities), knowledge about the international system, including specifically WHO, and experience from similar international processes.

4. The Independent Panel will review experience gained and lessons learned from the WHO-coordinated international health response to COVID-19, including:

- the effectiveness of the mechanisms at WHO’s disposal;
- the functioning of the International Health Regulations (2005) and the status of implementation of the relevant recommendations of previous IHR Review Committees;
- WHO’s contribution to United Nations-wide efforts; and the actions of WHO and their timelines pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/09-07-2020-independent-evaluation-of-global-covid-19-response-announced> (press release).

5. The Independent Panel will make recommendations on how to improve capacity for global pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response, including through strengthening, as appropriate, the WHO Health Emergencies Programme.
6. It will do so by providing a fresh assessment of the challenges ahead, based on insights and lessons learned from the health response to COVID-19 as coordinated by WHO as well as previous health emergencies.
7. The Independent Panel will conduct an impartial, independent and comprehensive review, beginning in September 2020 with a report expected in advance of the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly scheduled for May 2021. The Independent Panel will provide progress reports to the WHO governing bodies.
8. The Independent Panel will work in a manner that is as open and transparent as possible and seek out the world's best possible expertise and experiences; it will also work with a view to listening to different stakeholders' perspectives. Data and evidence will guide the work of the Independent Panel.
9. The first Panel meeting is scheduled for 17 September 2020. The Independent Panel is then expected to agree on the key themes, methods of gathering evidence and ways of working.
10. The Co-Chairs shared the draft terms of reference for the Independent Panel with Member States and received with appreciation comments which were used in finalizing them. The terms of reference are available at the Independent Panel's website (see paragraph 14 below).
11. Over the course of several months, the Panel will seek evidence and views from a broad range of stakeholders including from WHO Member States, health experts, economists, specialists on the social impacts of the pandemic, and from the general public as well as civil society and the private sector.
12. The Independent Panel will collaborate with and benefit from work of other bodies such as the IHR Review Committee and the Independent Oversight and Advisory Committee.
13. The Independent Panel will maintain independence and impartiality and will also seek to ensure that its processes are as transparent as possible.
14. Anyone can obtain information about the Panel, panelists, processes, key documents, key dates and events at this website: [www.TheIndependentPanel.org](http://www.TheIndependentPanel.org).
15. The Independent Panel will be supported by a secretariat. The role of the secretariat is to support the Independent Panel to fulfil its mandate and terms of reference. The Head of the panel secretariat is Anders Nordström, who has taken leave as Ambassador for Global Health at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs for the duration of the Independent Panel.

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