

Report of the meeting

1. The eighth meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) to draft and negotiate a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response was held from 19 February to 1 March 2024 in a hybrid format, under the leadership of Ms Precious Matsoso of South Africa and Mr Roland Driee of the Kingdom of the Netherlands as Co-Chairs, with the following Vice-Chairs: Ambassador Tovar da Silva Nunes of Brazil; Ambassador Amr Ramadan of Egypt; Dr Viroj Tangcharoensathien of Thailand; and Ambassador Honsei Kozo of Japan.
2. In his remarks, the Director-General encouraged the INB to continue to work towards meeting its mandate as decided at the second special session of the World Health Assembly and submit its outcome to the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly in May 2024. He recalled that the INB had made progress since its establishment and encouraged delegations to continue to be flexible and find compromise solutions. He further encouraged them to continue to address misinformation and disinformation, especially regarding the role of the WHO Secretariat in supporting Member States in their development of the pandemic agreement, stressing that the agreement was being negotiated by countries for countries.
3. In line with previous practice and the promotion of transparency in the work of the INB, agenda item 1 (Opening of the session and adoption of the agenda and programme of work), the open session on agenda item 2 (Consideration and negotiation of the WHO convention, agreement, or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response: Proposal for negotiating text of the WHO pandemic agreement, based on progress made) and agenda items 5 (Report of the meeting) and 6 (Closure of the session) were webcast, while the drafting group sessions on items 2 (Consideration and negotiation of the WHO convention, agreement, or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response: Proposal for negotiating text of the WHO pandemic agreement, based on progress made), 3 (Next steps) and 4 (Proposals from Member States of entities to be included in Annex D and/or Annex E of document A/INB/7/4) were held in closed sessions.
4. With respect to item 2, the INB recalled that at its seventh meeting, it had established four drafting subgroups under the leadership of the Vice-Chairs and with the support of co-facilitators, with a view to producing text for consideration at its eighth meeting. Furthermore, in respect of the Articles not under consideration by subgroups, it had requested the Bureau to produce text, including with the support of volunteers. The INB expressed appreciation for the work of the Vice-Chairs and co-facilitators, as well as the volunteers.

5. The INB requested the Bureau to develop a revised draft of the negotiating text of the WHO Pandemic Agreement, to be considered by the INB at its ninth meeting, for textual negotiations. An advance unedited English version of the revised draft of the negotiating text will be distributed to Member States and relevant stakeholders by Friday 8 March 2024, and the translated versions made available as soon as possible thereafter.

6. The INB and the Working Group on amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) (WGIHR) met in a second joint plenary session on 23 February 2024. Member States reached the following outcomes for the ongoing work of the INB and WGIHR.

(a) Regarding “Public health alert – public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) – pandemic continuum” this will be primarily addressed through discussion and text negotiation in the WGIHR, and the INB process will make reference to the amended International Health Regulations, as appropriate.

(b) Regarding “Pandemic prevention, preparedness, surveillance, One Health”:

(i) Public health surveillance will be primarily addressed through discussion and text negotiation in the WGIHR, and the INB process will make reference to the International Health Regulations, as appropriate; and

(ii) One Health and the human-animal-environment interface will be primarily addressed through discussion and text negotiation in the INB, with reference to the amended International Health Regulations, as appropriate.

7. The INB and WGIHR Bureaus will continue to work closely together to progress these and other matters in the respective processes in order to ensure coherence and reduce duplication. They will also work together, with the support of the Secretariat, on the draft resolution(s)/decision(s) to be considered by Member States in advance of submission to the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly. It was noted that “nothing is agreed until everything is agreed” and that the proposals discussed during the joint plenary session were without prejudice to ongoing Member State negotiations.

8. Having considered the participation of relevant stakeholders (document A/INB/7/4) in its work, the INB requested the Bureau to continue to explore innovative ways to further support their meaningful participation in line with the agreed method of work (document A/INB/1/3 Rev.1), including by exploring opportunities for stakeholder contributions to be offered at more regular intervals at its ninth meeting.

9. The INB agreed to additional proposals from Member States for five relevant stakeholders to be included in Annex E of document A/INB/7/4 on the understanding that the document continues to be a living document. The INB further agreed to defer the consideration of one proposed entity to a later date, pending further considerations.

10. The meeting considered and approved its report, and the Co-Chairs closed the session.

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