

Report of the meeting

1. The first meeting of the Standing Committee on health emergency prevention, preparedness and response (“the Standing Committee”) was held virtually on 12 December 2022. The officers of the Standing Committee were appointed, with Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah of Malaysia as Chair and Professor Jérôme Salomon of France as Vice-Chair.
2. The Director-General provided the opening remarks, welcomed all participants and indicated that he looked forward to being advised and supported by the Standing Committee through the Executive Board.
3. The Chair recalled the functions of the Standing Committee as per the terms of reference contained in decision EB151(2). The Secretariat then provided a background presentation on the WHO Health Emergencies Programme, including an overview of ongoing public health emergencies of international concern, and the relevant legislation and oversight mechanisms. A rich discussion followed, including questions and comments from Standing Committee members, as well as from Member States not represented on the Standing Committee. It was stressed that the work of the Standing Committee needed to be complementary and avoid duplication with other relevant processes.
4. Since the Standing Committee shall meet at least twice annually and provide a report of each of its meetings to the Executive Board (as per the terms of reference contained in decision EB151(2)), it was agreed that meetings could be scheduled in March or April to report to the Executive Board meeting convening after the World Health Assembly, and in October or November to report to the Executive Board meeting convening at the start of the calendar year. Preferably, at least one of those two meetings will be convened in person or in hybrid form; the meeting dates will be set by the Chair and the Vice-Chair, in consultation with the Director-General. Efforts will be made to take advantage of existing formal and informal meetings when scheduling the meetings of the Standing Committee. When a need arises, ad hoc emergency meetings need to be called.
5. The Standing Committee discussed the misalignment between the terms of membership of the Standing Committee, because of the timing of nominations in December, vis-à-vis the normal cycle of committee membership that usually aligns with the Health Assembly schedule. The Committee recommended that the Executive Board consider the matter at its next meeting.
6. The Standing Committee considered and adopted its meeting report. The meeting was closed.