

**Public health emergencies: preparedness and response: IOAC
Implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005)**

Esteemed Chair and Member States,

On behalf of Lebanon, we express our gratitude for the ongoing efforts to improve emergency preparedness and response, and for the commitment to enhance the implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR) to safeguard populations from risks and emergencies. We reviewed the IHR committees' standing recommendations embedded in document A77/8 and its addenda, especially the convening of a special committee to advise on recommendations for long-term risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We also extend our appreciation to the Independent Oversight and Advisory Committee and share their concern that, as mentioned in their report, the demand is likely to substantially increase in the face of the growing number of grave emergencies across the globe. In addition, we invite all of us to strengthen the WHO health emergencies program, and to further support the IOAC to continue to monitor and scrutinize the program's operations in order to optimize its potential.

Our region continues to face significant challenges with public health emergencies. Lebanon, in particular, has been struggling with a multitude of crises, including the Syrian refugee crisis, and the recent multiple outbreaks.

In response to these challenges, our National Health Strategy Vision 2030, stresses on the importance of investing in emergency preparedness and response, with a focus on strengthening epidemiological surveillance to fulfill our IHR obligations. Furthermore, and as part of our commitment to enhancing emergency response and coordination, we have activated our Public Health Emergency Operations Center (PHEOC). This activation was complemented by efforts in human resources recruitment and capacity building.

Our work facing the emergencies is ongoing and we are thankful for WHO's continuous support to Lebanon, and we reaffirm our commitment to collaborating with the international community to strengthen our preparedness and response to public health emergencies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Facing the rising geopolitical instability, we fully endorse the recommendation of the IOAC that WHO's role should remain at the center of the global architecture for health emergencies preparedness and response, and that WHO's secretariat is best placed to act as the secretariat to the Conference of the Parties to the newly proposed pandemic agreement.

Together, we can build a safer and healthier future for all.