

**Independent Oversight and Advisory Committee
for the WHO Health Emergencies Programme
Meeting Report**

**16th meeting by phone
Geneva, Switzerland**

**Tuesday 4 September 2018
14:00–16:00 CEST**

Agenda: please see Annex

Participants

IOAC: Felicity Harvey (Chairperson), Hiroyoshi Endo, Geeta Rao Gupta, Jeremy Konyndyk, Precious Matsoso, Theresa Tam

WHO Secretariat: Peter Salama (DDG/WHE), Munjoo Park

Summary of discussions

A series of documents was circulated to members by the Secretariat prior to the meeting: a proposed revision to the IOAC terms of reference (TOR) based on discussion during the previous call of 18 June 2018, the IOAC monitoring framework, and the IOAC work plan for the period of September 2018–April 2019. As per the IOAC's request from the last call, the Secretariat also produced a comparative table of various committees and advisory groups and shared it with members for reference.

Members reviewed the agenda items and defined expected outcomes of the call as: (1) approval of the revised TOR, (2) agreement on the IOAC monitoring framework for the initial 6 months, on the understanding that it is a living document, and (3) decision on the field visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) planned for 14–20 October.

IOAC terms of reference 2018–2020

The following revisions to the TOR were discussed:

- Deletion of reference to the UN Secretary General, the Inter Agency Standing Committee, and reports on the state of health security submitted to the UN General Assembly (see clause 1, 2.d)
- Spelling out of the IOAC's function to review the WHE's performance in four areas of work: preparedness, prevention, detection and response (see 2.b)
- Amendment of the statement on the IOAC's function with regard to financing (see 2.c)
- Amendment of clause 2.f given that the IOAC has systematically produced its report for both EB and WHA
- Rewording of clause 4 regarding travel entitlements.

Members agreed on the proposed changes and adopted the revised version of the TOR, which is to be published on the IOAC website.

IOAC monitoring framework

In light of WHE's progress over the past 2 years and the new challenges and opportunities that WHO is facing, members identified the issues that the IOAC should focus on for 2018–2020 and grouped them into three categories:

1. Legacy from the IOAC's 2016–2018 term

The IOAC will continue to oversee WHO's performance in outbreaks and other emergencies, the extent to which previous recommendations are being implemented, and the areas that need to be kept under IOAC's review as suggested by A71/5.

2. WHO transformation agenda

The IOAC will monitor the issues requiring WHO's investment and capacity at the corporate level such as procurement, security, staff protection, business processes and organizational culture. The IOAC recognizes WHO's transformation agenda as the driving force behind addressing these issues. Hence the IOAC will review progress with the transformation agenda and its impact on the WHE Programme.

3. WHE Programme in relation to the GPW13

The IOAC will focus on programmatic areas rather than issues related to processes or procedures. From September 2018 to May 2019, the IOAC will look into WHO's work towards its three GPW13 outcomes: (1) all countries are prepared for health emergencies, (2) epidemics and pandemics are prevented, and (3) health emergencies are rapidly detected and responded to.

Members also noted that the IOAC should question whether WHO has the capacity to manage a major pandemic or simultaneous outbreaks in different regions. Since an answer to that question would depend on partners' capacity, IOAC should review the global capacity through other relevant mechanisms such as the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board. The Secretariat was asked to incorporate this aspect and finalize the monitoring framework.

Decision on the field visit to the DRC

The IOAC had planned to conduct a field visit to the DRC to review WHO's response to the Ebola outbreak in Equateur province, which was declared over on 24 July 2018. Three members had kindly offered their availability for the mission during the period of 15–19 October 2018.

However, in light of the new outbreak in the provinces of North Kivu and Ituri and the attendant security challenges, members considered a number of options – to postpone the DRC mission until the current Ebola outbreak is under control or to change the focus to a review of WHO's work in fragile states. A member suggested visiting one of the countries neighbouring the DRC, for example Uganda, given the shared border and the large movement of people.

Members decided to carry out a field mission to Uganda in October to review WHO's work to support country preparedness and readiness.

DDG/WHE briefed the IOAC on the current outbreak in North Kivu and Ituri provinces, which border Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan. The displacement of refugees, large numbers of people crossing the borders, and security challenges are among potential risk factors for transmission of Ebola at the national and regional levels. DDG noted that the Ministry of Health, WHO and partners are monitoring and investigating alerts in other provinces in the DRC and in neighbouring countries.

As of 3 September 2018, a total of 124 cases of Ebola (93 confirmed and 31 probable), including 85 deaths (54 confirmed and 31 probable) were reported in seven health zones in North Kivu province (Beni, Butembo, Kalunguta, Mabalako, Masereka, Musienene and Oicha), as well as Mandima health zone in Ituri province. DDG noted that while cases have been recorded in other areas, recent confirmed transmission events were localized to Beni, Mabalako and Mandima health zones. The health-care worker exposures in health facilities in Mandima and Beni are of particular concern.

The IOAC was briefed that since the declaration of the outbreak on 1 August 2018, WHO has

deployed more than 190 experts to support response activities including logisticians, epidemiologists, laboratory experts, communicators, clinical care specialists, community engagement specialists and emergency coordinators.

DDG expressed concern that the security situation in North Kivu and Ituri may hinder the implementation of response activities. The IOAC recommended that WHO provide a regular update on the current Ebola outbreak and response activities.

End

