

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

**19th meeting by phone
Geneva, Switzerland**

**Friday 8 February 19
14:00–16:00 CET**

Participants

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

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

Summary of discussions

The purpose of the call was to debrief on the 144th session of the Executive Board (EB144) and to prepare two special projects commissioned by the Director-General in relation with the allegations raised in the anonymous emails and by the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (GPMB) for Ebola deep dive. The Chair suggested having an initial discussion about a field mission in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

144th session of the Executive Board meeting

The Chair reported that the IOAC report EB144/8 was presented to the EB144 under agenda item 5.2. public health preparedness and response on 28 January 2019. The report was well received by Member States (MS) and about 40 interventions were made. There was strong agreement by Ms on the IOAC assessment, in particular:

- WHO is leading major field operations for emergencies.
- Significant progress was made in finance and business processes.
- The Ebola outbreak in North kivu demonstrated a proof of the concept for the WHE programme.
- Partnership in the Ebola response is weak and others should step up to support WHO.
- Further efforts and investment are required for preparedness work and health system strengthening.

Review of cultural and systemic issues

The IOAC agreed to conduct a special review on HR diversity and other issues that could impact on staff moral and performance. The Chair and Precious Matsoso will travel to Geneva to interview key staff HQ on 25-26 February including Directors of Human Resources Department, Internal Oversight Services, Compliance, Risk management and Ethics department, and Legal counsel.

The IOAC noted the relevance of the cultural survey led by the transformation agenda to the work and requested that a session with Dr Bruce Aylward be included.

A member suggested the IOAC should speak to a broader range of personnel and the IOAC agreed that the WHE diversity working group or the Staff Association could be requested to provide a

number-limited group of staff to be interviewed by the Committee.

The IOAC requested HR data and statistics which can allow a comparison between WHO and WHE, and it would also be presented broken down by region. The IOAC Secretary will follow up.

Given the amount of work and tight timeline, the IOAC suggested allocating extra time in the margins of the upcoming in-person meeting, which is planned on 21-22 March. Four members agreed to travel few days before the in-person meeting and the IOAC Secretary will propose a draft programme from 18 to 25 March.

Ebola deep dive: preparation for a field mission in DRC

The IOAC agreed on the terms of reference for the work commissioned by the GPMB and decided to conduct a field mission in DRC in April. The mission should be planned for about 10 days to allow sufficient time to visit Kinshasa, Goma and Butembo. The purpose of the mission is:

1. Review the WHO's performance and advise the Director-General on how to improve the WHE Programme, as part of the IOAC's mandate:
2. Review the collective capacity of WHO and other key actors to respond to the Ebola outbreak, and the progress made since the Ebola crisis in West Africa 2014-16. This part of the mission is commissioned by the GPMB.

The IOAC identified key aspects for which the mission is expected to provide intelligence:

- WHO's interaction with stakeholders in the humanitarian community;
- The effect of security concerns and practices on the response;
- Challenges around community resistance and how that has been overcome.

The IOAC recommended putting a priority to visit the epicentre and to listen to local communities. The IOAC Secretary will circulate the TOR for the mission and initiate consultations on methods and logistics of the field mission with the Country Office and the teams on the ground.

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