

Report of the First Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Review Committee on the Role of the International Health Regulations (2005) in the Ebola Outbreak and Response

ORGANIZATION AND PROCESS OF THE MEETING

1. The first inter-sessional meeting of the Review Committee took place at WHO headquarters in Geneva, 5-9 October 2015, with the following agenda:

1. Welcome and introduction
2. Reports from the Review Committee technical subcommittees
3. Interviews with informants
4. Review Committee deliberative sessions
5. Open Session via webcast

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

2. On the first day, an interview was conducted in person with Dr Marie-Paule Kieny, Assistant Director-General, Health Systems and Innovation.

3. On the second day, interviews were conducted by telephone (except where indicated) with the following individuals: Professor Chris Baggoley, Chief Medical Officer, Australian Government Department of Health, Canberra, Australia and Chairman of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee concerning Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV); Dr Roderico Ofrin, Director, Health Security & Emergency Response, WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia (SEARO); Dr Bardan Rana, Regional Adviser, International Health and Regulations, SEARO; Dr Ailan Li, Director, Division of Health Security and Emergencies, WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific; Dr Mohammed Belhocine, WHO Representative to Guinea; Dr Keita Sakoba, National Coordinator of the Fight against Ebola in Guinea, Guinea; Dr Ibrahima-Soce Fall, Director, Health Security and Emergencies Cluster, WHO Regional Office for Africa (AFRO); Dr Florimond Tshioko Kweteminga, Medical Officer, Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme, AFRO; Mr Thomas K Nagbe, Director, Disease Prevention and Control, Ministry of Health, Liberia; Dr Alex Gasasira, WHO Representative to Liberia; Dr Zabulon Yoti, Deputy WHO Country Representative, Sierra Leone; Dr David Nabarro, United Nations Secretary-General Special Envoy on Ebola and Chair, Advisory Group on Reform of WHO's Work in Outbreaks and

Emergencies with Health and Humanitarian Consequences; Professor Ilona Kickbusch, Director of the Global Health Programme at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, Switzerland and Member, Ebola Interim Assessment Panel (in-person interview); Professor Helen Rees, Executive Director, Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute, University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Johannesburg, South Africa and Chairwoman, IHR Emergency Committee concerning ongoing events and context involving transmission and international spread of poliovirus (in-person interview); Dr Sylvain Aldighieri, Head, IHR, Epidemic Alert and Response, and Water Borne Diseases Unit, WHO Regional Office for the Americas (AMRO); Dr. Roberta Andraghetti, Regional Advisor for International Health Regulations, AMRO; Dr Ray Arthur, Director of the Global Disease Detection Operations Center, Division of Global Health Protection, Center for Global Health, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Chair, Steering Committee, WHO Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN); Mr Patrick Drury, Manager, GOARN Operational Support Team, Preparedness Surveillance and Response, Department of Global Capacities, Alert and Response (in-person interview); Dr Guénaél Rodier, Director of the Division of Communicable Diseases, Health Security and Environment, WHO Regional Office for Europe (EURO); Dr Thomas Hofmann, Technical Officer, Country Emergency Preparedness, EURO.

4. Interviews continued on the third day in person (except where noted) with the following members of the Department of Global Capacities Alert and Response; Dr Stella Chungong, Coordinator, Global Preparedness, Surveillance and Response Operations (PSR); Mr Daniel Menucci, Technical Officer, Ports Airports and Ground Crossings, (PAG), Support to IHR Capacity Assessment, Development and Maintenance (CAD); Dr Philippe Barboza, Epidemiologist, Global Surveillance & Risk Assessment (RAS), PSR; Dr Johannes Schnitzler, Medical Officer, RAS, PSR; Ms Erika Garcia, Technical Officer, Pandemic and Epidemic Diseases, PED; Mr Gian Luca Burci, WHO Legal Counsel; Dr Keiji Fukuda, Assistant Director-General, Health Security; and Professor Robert Steffen, Department of Epidemiology and Prevention of Infectious Diseases, WHO Collaborating Centre for Travellers' Health, University of Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland and Vice-Chair, IHR Emergency Committee regarding Ebola (by telephone).

SUMMARY OF DELIBERATIVE SESSIONS

5. During its deliberative sessions, the Review Committee discussed the preliminary analyses and findings of the three technical subcommittees, which were tasked to review the IHR (2005) in entirety. The Committee also discussed the interviews with key informants and the implications for its work.

6. The Committee identified ten key challenges, along which it will focus its work over the coming months: national focal points; notification and data sharing; a public health emergency of international concern; WHO recommendations; cooperation and communication within and between States Parties, and regional approaches; cooperation with intergovernmental organizations and partners (e.g. NGOs and the private sector); core capacities of States Parties (prioritising, building, monitoring and assessment); all-hazards public health preparedness and response (including ensuring essential air transport capacity at all times); additional health measures instituted by States Parties; and compliance and accountability through transparency and reporting. The Committee also recognised the need for a concerted communications effort for more effective implementation of the IHR, and to underline the urgency of ensuring compliance.

7. The Committee agreed to probe these challenges through a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis to identify the factors that promote or inhibit successful implementation of the IHR. This in turn will lead to the identification of expected outcomes and to advance the Committee's work in developing recommendations.

8. The Committee also discussed a variety of factors, e.g. political, economic, scientific, and educational, that can facilitate a supportive environment for implementation of the IHR.

9. The Chair proposed a schedule and plan of organization for the remainder of the Committee's work including an outline for its report. The Committee will continue in deliberative sessions during a second inter-sessional meeting to be held 9-13 November 2015 in Geneva. Further interviews with key informants will be conducted by the Committee. In the inter-sessional periods, the Committee and its technical subcommittees will continue their work through teleconference and electronic exchange.

10. A preliminary report will be presented to the Executive Board in January 2016, and a final report to the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly in May 2016.

OPEN SESSION

11. An open session via webcast was held on the afternoon of the final day of the meeting. The Committee presented the key findings of its subcommittees and a summary of the key challenges identified in the deliberative sessions, and outlined the direction of its future work. The Chair invited comments and questions from representatives of States Parties, the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and other relevant intergovernmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations in official relations with WHO. The Review Committee welcomes future written submissions.

12. The Committee discussed and approved the meeting report.

Annex

Members participating in the First Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Review Committee on the Role of the International Health Regulations (2005) in the Ebola Outbreak and Response

Dr Preben Aavitsland
Chief Municipal Medical Officer of Arendal City, Norway

Dr Salah T. Al Awaidy
Communicable Diseases Advisor in Health Affairs, Ministry of Health, Muscat, Oman

Dr Hanan Balkhy
Executive Director of Infection Prevention and Control Department, Ministry of National Guard, King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Dr Marion Bullock DuCasse
Chief Medical Officer of Jamaica

Professor Rupa Chanda
Economics & Social Sciences Faculty, Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB), Bangalore, India

Dr Supamit Chunsuttiwat
Senior Medical Officer, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, Nonthaburi, Thailand

Professor Thomas Cottier
Emeritus Professor of European and International Economic Law, University of Bern, and Senior Research Fellow and Former Managing Director at the World Trade Institute, Switzerland

Mr Andrew Forsyth
Team Leader, Public Health Legislation & Policy, Ministry of Health, New Zealand

Professor Didier Houssin
President of the Evaluation Agency for Research and Higher Education, Paris, France

Mr John Lavery
Executive Director of Health Emergency Management British Columbia (HEMBC), Vancouver, Canada

Dr Brian McCloskey
Director of Global Health, Public Health England, London, UK

Professor Babacar Ndoeye
Expert-consultant and trainer in hospital hygiene, infection control and patient safety, Dakar, Senegal

Professor Helen Rees
Executive Director of the Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute of the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg, South Africa

Ms Karen Tan
Senior Director at the Ministry of Communications and Information, Singapore