

Report of the first meeting of the Review Committee regarding amendments to the International Health regulations (2005) (virtual)

6 October 2022

The Director-General welcomed the participants by video message and wished them a productive meeting as experts nominated to the Review Committee regarding amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR).

The Secretariat then invited the [Committee members](#) to introduce themselves and to share their expertise in relation to the draft Terms of Reference of the Review Committee.

Legal Counsel reviewed the mandate of the Committee as provided for by the Decision WHA75(9) and the relevant provisions of the IHR and reminded all members that they are acting solely in their capacity as individual experts and not on behalf of any government or organization. The requirement to keep all proceedings confidential was also recalled.

The Ethics Officer from the Office for Compliance, Risk Management, and Ethics reviewed declarations of interest from all members and asked for additional disclosures that may not have been captured in the submitted forms. CRE is still in the process of assessing the information and will provide an update to be attached to this meeting report.

Legal Counsel reminded the Committee that they are constituted as an Expert Committee under the WHO Rules and procedures for Expert Advisory Panels, as provided for in the Basic Documents of WHO. In accordance with these Rules, he then proceeded with the election of the officers for the Committee. Three persons were nominated to fill the roles of Chair, Vice-chair, and Rapporteur:

- Dr Patrick Mutuma Amoth, Kenya, Chair
- Ambassador Juan Jose Gomez Comacho, Mexico, Vice-Chair
- Dr Clare Wenham, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Rapporteur

There were no objections to these nominations, and the three experts were therefore appointed as officers of the Committee.

The meeting was handed over to the Chair, who recalled the objectives of the meeting, which were: to review of the draft Terms of Reference of the RC; to agree on Methods of Work of the Review Committee; and to begin a preliminary review of proposed amendments to the IHR submitted by States Parties.

The Secretariat was invited to set the background for the work of the Committee and to present the draft Terms of Reference. The Secretariat recalled the rationale for convening the Review Committee as illustrated in [Decision WHA75\(9\)](#), whereby the Health Assembly decided “to request the Director-General to convene a Review Committee on the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR Review Committee), as early as possible but no later than 1 October 2022, in accordance with Part IX, Chapter III, of the International Health

Regulations (2005), in particular Article 50, paragraphs 1(a) and 6, with particular attention to be paid to the fulfilment of the letter and spirit of Article 51, paragraph 2, to make technical recommendations on the proposed amendments referred to in subparagraph (c) below, with a view to informing the work of the WGIHR¹.

The Secretariat also informed the Committee that as of 30 September 2022, the deadline contemplated in Decision WHA75(9) for Member States to submit proposals for targeted amendments, 14 Member States submitted proposals for targeted amendments, some of these submissions being proposed on behalf of larger groups of Member States (see box 1).

Box 1. States Parties that submitted proposals for amendments to the IHR by 30 September 2022 and the related articles to which amendments were proposed

- **Armenia (comments)**
- **Bangladesh:** Article 1, 2, 3, 13, 44, Annex 1
- **Brazil:** Articles 5, 9, 13, 18, 35, 56, Annexes 2, 3, 6, 8
- **Czech Republic on behalf of the Member States of the European Union:** Articles 3, 6, 7, 11, 12, 15, 23, 35, 36, 43, 44, 48, 49, 54, Annexes 1, 6
- **Eswantini on behalf the WHO Africa Region Member States:** Articles 1, 2, 4, 6, 12, 13, 43, 44, 45, 53, Annexes 1, 10
- **India:** Articles (1 - comments), 2, 3, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 23, 28, 49, Annex 1
- **Indonesia:** Articles 6, 18, 23, 31, 44, 45 and Annex 6
- **Japan:** Articles 8, 13, 24, 27, 28, 45, Annex 2
- **Namibia (comments)**
- **New Zealand:** Articles: 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 49
- **Russian Federation on behalf of the Member States of the Eurasian Economic Union:** Articles 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 18, 23, 44, Annex 1
- **Switzerland:** Articles 4, 12, 48
- **United States of America:** Articles 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 18, 48, 49, 53
- **Uruguay on behalf of MERCOSUR:** Articles 5, 9, 13, 18, 19, 35, 56, Annexes 3, 6, 8

Discussion then followed on issues such as how the Committee's work might engage with the Member States Working Groups, and how will the Committee approach the multitude of proposed amendments. Clarification was requested on the draft Terms of Reference, as well as on future meeting dates.

The Secretariat, including Legal Counsel, clarified the details in the terms of reference, which were subsequently revised and [republished](#), as well as the modalities of work with other working groups, and proposed a revised calendar for the upcoming meetings.

Before the next meeting, scheduled as face to face in Geneva from 24 to 28 October 2022, Committee members were invited to have a first read of the proposed amendments, and to consider a potential categorization of the proposals into the following categories: "quick wins" (proposals that may not pose any controversy and are helpful for clarifications and better implementation of the articles); "convergent proposals" (amendments proposed for the same article which are complementary or similar in scope); "divergent proposals"

¹ WGIHR is the Member States "Working Group on Amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005)", established also through Decision WHA75(9) as a continuation of the Working Group on Strengthening WHO Preparedness and Response to Health Emergencies, (WGPR) with a revised mandate to work exclusively on consideration of proposed targeted amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005), consistent with decision EB150(3) (2022), for consideration by the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly in 2024;

(amendments for the same article which are different in scope, and/or controversial); “new articles” (amendments that propose introduction of completely new text). Another category might include the proposed amendments that address issues currently being considered within the scope of the new [convention, agreement, or other international instrument](#) on pandemic preparedness and response, currently being considered by the [Intergovernmental Negotiating Body](#).

Lastly, the Secretariat informed that, in line with provisions of Article 51.2 of the IHR, an open session will also be organized during the week of 24 October, with the participation of Member States, United Nations Agencies and non-state actors in official relations with WHO. On the same occasion, States Parties who submitted proposals for amendments will be offered the opportunity to present the rationale of their proposals to the Review Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 15:00 CEST.