

Terms of Reference for the International Commission for the Certification of Yaws Eradication

Yaws is a chronic, relapsing infectious disease caused by *Treponema pallidum* subspecies *pertenue*. It primarily affects children living in impoverished, remote, and underserved tropical communities. Transmitted through direct skin-to-skin contact, yaws causes painful and disfiguring skin and bone lesions and, if left untreated, may result in long-term disability and stigma. This has significant socio-economic consequences for affected individuals and communities.

In 2013, recognizing the public health importance of yaws and the feasibility of interrupting transmission through safe and effective single-dose oral antibiotic treatment, the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly, in resolution WHA66.12, endorsed the target of yaws eradication. National yaws eradication programmes aim to interrupt transmission through intensified surveillance and the systematic use of antibiotics in endemic populations.

Eradication will only be achieved when all countries and territories are certified free of transmission. To this end, the World Health Organization (WHO) has established the International Commission for the Certification of Yaws Eradication (ICCYE). ICCYE serves as an independent advisory body to WHO. On the basis of national reports and findings from international verification activities, the Commission makes recommendations to the Director-General of WHO regarding the certification of interruption of transmission and the eradication of yaws.

This document presents the Terms of Reference for ICCYE, conforming with WHO's policy on advisory groups.

I. Functions

In its capacity as an advisory body to WHO, ICCYE shall have the following functions:

The overarching role of ICCYE is to advise the Director-General of WHO on the validity of the information provided by non-endemic and formerly-endemic countries claiming that cases of indigenous yaws do not exist or no longer exist, respectively.

1. *To provide independent evaluation of the scientific, technical and strategic aspects of the certification of yaws eradication, including:*
 - a. *Revising, as necessary, the criteria and certification procedures to fit the evolving epidemiological context of yaws;*
 - b. *Upon WHO's request, conducting field visits to yaws-affected countries to assess progress;*
2. *To advise WHO on matters pertaining to the certification of yaws eradication.*

3. *To review countries', areas' and territories' requests for certification and make recommendations to WHO on whether to certify countries, areas and territories as free of yaws transmission.*

II. Composition

1. ICCYE shall have up to 12 Members¹, who shall serve in their personal capacities to represent the broad range of disciplines relevant to the certification of eradication of yaws. In the selection of ICCYE Members, consideration shall be given to attaining an adequate distribution of technical expertise, geographical representation and gender balance.

2. Members of ICCYE shall be selected and appointed by WHO following an open call for experts.

3. One Member will be designated as the Chairperson. The Chairperson's functions include the following:

- to chair meetings of ICCYE; and
- to liaise with the WHO Secretariat between meetings.

In appointing a Chairperson, consideration shall be given to gender and geographical representation.

4. Members of ICCYE shall be appointed to serve for a period of 4 years and shall be eligible for reappointment for no more than 2 consecutive terms. A Chairperson is eligible for reappointment as a Member of ICCYE, but is only permitted to serve as Chairperson for one term. The appointment of a Member and/or designation as Chairperson may be terminated at any time by WHO if WHO's interest so requires or, as otherwise specified in these Terms of Reference or letter of appointment. Where a Member's appointment is terminated, WHO may decide to appoint a replacement Member.

5. ICCYE Members must respect the impartiality and independence required of WHO. In performing their work, Members may not seek or accept instructions from any Government or from any authority external to WHO. They must be free of any real, potential or apparent conflict of interest. To this end, proposed Members will be required to complete a declaration of interests form and a confidentiality undertaking form, and to do so again periodically whilst appointed; their appointment, or continuation of their appointment, shall be subject to the evaluation of completed forms by the WHO Secretariat, determining that their participation would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.

¹ Members serve as full participants and partake in the decision-making process of the meeting in which they are involved.

6. Following the determination that a proposed Member's participation in ICCYE would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest, the proposed member will be sent a letter inviting them to be a Member of ICCYE. Appointment to ICCYE is subject to WHO receiving the countersigned invitation letter and letter of agreement. Notwithstanding the requirement to complete the WHO declaration of interest form, ICCYE Members have an ongoing obligation to inform the WHO of any interests real or perceived that may give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.

7. As indicated in paragraph II.5 above, WHO may, from time to time, request ICCYE members to complete a new declaration of interest form. This may be before an ICCYE meeting or any other ICCYE-related activity or engagement, as decided by WHO. Where WHO has made such a request, the ICCYE Member's participation in the ICCYE activity or appointment is subject to a determination that their participation or appointment would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.

8. Where an ICCYE Member is invited by WHO to travel to an in-person ICCYE meeting, WHO shall, subject to any conflict of interest determination as set out in paragraph II.7 above, issue a letter of appointment as a temporary adviser and accompanying memorandum of agreement (together 'Temporary Adviser Letter'). WHO shall not authorize travel by an ICCYE Member, until it receives a countersigned Temporary Adviser Letter.

9. ICCYE Members do not receive any remuneration from the Organization for any work related to the ICCYE. However, when attending in-person meetings at the invitation of WHO, their travel costs and per diem shall be covered by WHO in accordance with applicable WHO rules and policies.

III. Operation

1. ICCYE shall normally meet at least once each year. However, WHO may convene additional meetings. ICCYE meetings may be held in person (at WHO headquarters in Geneva or another location, as determined by WHO) or virtually, via video or teleconference, or via emails and review of documents.

ICCYE meetings may be held in open and/or closed session, as decided by the Chairperson in consultation with WHO.

- (a) Open sessions: Open sessions shall be convened for the sole purpose of the exchange of non-confidential information and views, and may be attended by Observers (as defined in paragraph III.3 below).
- (b) Closed sessions: The sessions dealing with the formulation of recommendations and/or advice to WHO shall be restricted to Members of ICCYE and essential WHO Secretariat staff.

2. The quorum for ICCYE meetings shall be two thirds of the members.
3. WHO may, at its sole discretion, invite external individuals from time to time to attend the open sessions of ICCYE meetings, or parts thereof, as “Observers”. Observers may be invited either in their personal capacity, or as representatives from a governmental institution / intergovernmental organization, or from a non-State actor. WHO will request Observers invited in their personal capacity to complete a confidentiality undertaking and a declaration of interests form prior to attending a session of ICCYE. Invitations to Observers attending as representatives from non-State actors will be subject to WHO internal due diligence and risk assessment including conflict of interest considerations in accordance with the framework for engagement with non-State actors (FENSA). Observers invited as representatives may also be requested to complete a confidentiality undertaking. Observers shall normally attend meetings of ICCYE at their own expense and be responsible for making all arrangements in that regard.

At the invitation of the Chairperson, Observers may be asked to present their personal views and/or the policies of their organization. Observers will not participate in the process of adopting recommendations of ICCYE.

4. ICCYE may decide to establish smaller working groups (sub-groups of ICCYE) to work on specific issues. Their deliberations shall take place via teleconference, video-conference or email communications. For these sub-groups, no quorum requirement will apply; the outcome of their deliberations will be submitted to ICCYE for review at one of its meetings.
5. ICCYE Members are expected to attend meetings. If a Member misses two consecutive meetings, WHO may end his/her appointment as a Member of the ICCYE.
6. ICCYE reports to the Director-General of WHO. Reports of each meeting shall be submitted by ICCYE to WHO. All recommendations from ICCYE are advisory to WHO, which retains full control over any subsequent decisions or actions regarding any proposals, policy issues or other matters considered by ICCYE.
7. ICCYE shall normally make recommendations by consensus. If, in exceptional circumstances, a consensus on a particular issue cannot be reached, minority opinions will be reflected in the meeting report.
8. Active participation is expected from all ICCYE Members, including in working groups, teleconferences, and interaction over email. ICCYE Members may, in advance of ICCYE meetings, be requested to review meeting documentation and to provide their views for consideration by ICCYE.
9. WHO shall determine the modes of communication by ICCYE, including between WHO and ICCYE Members, and ICCYE Members among themselves.

10. ICCYE Members shall not speak on behalf of, or represent, ICCYE or WHO to any third party.

IV. Secretariat

WHO shall provide the secretariat for ICCYE, including necessary scientific, technical, administrative and other support. In this regard, in advance of each meeting, the WHO Secretariat shall provide Members with the agenda, working documents and discussion papers. Distribution of the aforesaid documents to Observers will be determined by the WHO Secretariat. The meeting agenda shall include details such as: whether a meeting, or part thereof, is closed or open; and whether Observers are permitted to attend.

V. Information and documentation

1. Information and documentation to which Members may gain access in performing ICCYE related activities shall be considered as confidential and proprietary to WHO and/or parties collaborating with WHO. In addition, by counter signing the letter of appointment and the accompanying terms and conditions referred to in section II.5 above, ICCYE Members undertake to abide by the confidentiality obligations contained therein and also confirm that any and all rights in the work performed by them in connection with, or as a result of their ICCYE-related activities shall be exclusively vested in WHO.

2. ICCYE Members and Observers shall not quote from, circulate or use ICCYE documents for any purpose other than in a manner consistent with their responsibilities under these Terms of Reference.

3. WHO retains full control over the publication of the reports of ICCYE, including deciding whether or not to publish them.