Reference Group on Health Statistics (RGHS)

Roles and Responsibilities
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Reference Group on Health Statistics (RGHS)
Core objectives, roles and responsibilities
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RGHS Objectives:
The Reference Group on Health Statistics (RGHS) has the following core objectives:

- **Provide advice to WHO to allow the organization to benefit from the best possible scientific and strategic advice in the generation, analysis, use, interpretation and dissemination of global health statistics.**

- **Serve as a broad scientific and strategic platform to facilitate debate, exchange of knowledge and application of health statistics, and to accelerate efforts to improve data collection practices and analytical capacity in countries, including IHME, MCEE, IGME, and the UN Population Division and experts from well functioning national statistical systems.**

- **Offer expert recommendations to WHO to progress the global health statistics agenda while taking into account of current limitations.**
  - Seek to provide practical steps that can be implemented towards achieving aspirational outcomes.

- **Support WHO in the organization’s efforts to assist Member States to achieve maximal gains in population health through policies correctly informed by statistics, analytics and evidence.**
  - Supporting WHO efforts to assist Member States towards achieving WHO’s Thirteenth General Programme of Work (GPW 13), its “Triple Billion” targets, and the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

In its capacity as an advisory body to WHO, the Advisory Group shall complete its core objectives through the following functions:

1. **To provide technical and strategic advice to WHO to ensure that WHO’s practices in data processing and synthesis and in producing and using population-health related statistics, are evidence-based:**

   1.1. Giving advice to WHO on data principles and best practices to guide comparable population health statistics at the global, regional, and country levels;
1.2. Functioning as a general global platform to discuss the challenges and progress in reporting on the health-related SDGs with a focus on the methodological and data issues, including data processing;

1.3. Advising WHO on engaging in different interagency processes involving global health statistics;

1.4. Providing expert advice to WHO about the interpretation and use of forecasting studies for policy dialogue, including the appropriateness of forecasting methods.

2. To advise WHO on strengthening collaboration with external research groups in advancing the methodological agenda for population-health estimates:

2.1. Advising WHO on a broad range of population-health related statistics with a focus on cost-effective approaches to identifying and resolving key data gaps and data quality issues;

2.2. Advise WHO on active engagement for strengthening the scientific basis for global health estimates and related work, such as improving methods and skills for measuring patterns of cause-specific burdens of diseases, risk factors and injuries, and to collaborate wherever possible in the production of those estimates;

2.3. Advise WHO on facilitating collaboration and scientific exchange between disease-specific expert groups within WHO and work on cause-specific mortality and morbidity of diseases and injuries, with partners;

2.4. Advise WHO on convening expert task forces on specialized topics that require in-depth technical work to advance the methodological agenda.

3. To guide WHO on strengthening data and information systems for health:

3.1. Providing strategic and scientific advice to WHO to support the strengthening of country data and information systems for health, including data generation and critical analyses of data quality;

4. Promote GATHER compliance in producing population-health related statistics:

4.1. Offering recommendations to WHO on standards for official statistics, including adherence to the Guidelines on Accurate and Transparent Health Estimates Reporting Guidelines (GATHER) and on data principles underlying the use or endorsement of external analyses and estimates.
RGHS Roles and Responsibilities:

**RGHS Co-Chairs**

RGHS Chair positions are selected by WHO from the expert membership group of the RGHS. In appointing Chairpersons, consideration shall be given to expertise, gender balance, and geographical representation. RGHS Chairs must respect the impartiality and independence required of WHO. In performing their work, Chairs serve in their personal capacities and may not seek or accept instructions from any Government or from any authority external to the Organization. Chairs must be free of any real, potential or apparent conflicts of interest. Appointments last for 3 years.

RGHS Chairs are to work in close collaboration to lead the RGHS membership and serve as liaisons between the RGHS and WHO. RGHS Chairs, in consultation with WHO, drive the agenda for the RGHS and advocate for the work of the RGHS and its experts. Chairs are responsible for the oversight and management of the RGHS, supported by the WHO Secretariat, including strategic co-ordination of any sub-groups within the RGHS.

**Responsibilities:**

- Act as the leadership head of the RGHS and represent the RGHS membership and experts, including at key meetings and events.
- Advocate for RGHS expertise and independence.
- Support a collaborative WHO and RGHS working environment.
- Oversee RGHS development of recommendations which further the RGHS objective of supporting WHO’s efforts to assist Member States to ensure maximal gains in population health and policies derived from health data, analytics, interpretation, and reporting. In making recommendations RGHS should consider:
  - current WHO capabilities, as well as gaps and needs for future development
  - practical recommendations that can be implemented in the current context and active steps to achieve aspirational recommendations
  - Oversight of the formulation of key RGHS documents, including the terms of reference (ToRs) for TF Sub Groups, to ensure ToRs align with the strategic direction and the overall agenda of the RGHS.
  - Strategic oversight of RGHS TF Groups, including insuring RGHS TFs are working in collaboration where needed.
- Support the WHO Secretariat in ensuring RGHS members complete key RGHS administrative tasks e.g. confidentiality and Declaration of Interests forms.
- Respect the confidentiality of internal procedures and discussions and commit to aligning with WHO’s values of trust, integrity, a commitment to excellence in health, collaboration, and compassion.
- Drive RGHS membership towards meeting RGHS objectives and goals.
- Support TF Co-chairs to achieve TF workplans.
- Engage in constructive dialogue with other RGHS members, WHO experts, WHO RGHS Secretariat, RGHS Co-Chairs and RGHS TF Co-chairs.
- Respond to WHO RGHS Secretariat and RGHS TF Co-Chairs on information requests.
- Attend key co-ordination meetings and RGHS Chair meetings with RGHS Secretariat
- Support WHO Secretariat by engaging on RGHS work processes and following RGHS agreed processes in a timely manner.
- Regularly review RGHS membership and identify potential new members on an as needed basis.
- Work with WHO Secretariat to select new RGHS members and Co-Chair candidates where required.
**RGHS Task-Forces**

RGHS Task Forces are formed by the RGHS membership body to focus with their advice on specific RGHS issues. TF deliberations take place via teleconference or video-conference. The outcome of TF deliberations will be submitted to the RGHS membership during its Annual Meetings, and/or on request of the RGHS Chairs and WHO Secretariat.

**RGHS Task-Force Co-Chairs**

RGHS Task-Force Co-Chair positions will be selected by WHO in consultation with RGHS Chairs from the expert membership group of the RGHS. In appointing TF Co-Chairs, consideration shall be given to expertise, gender balance, and geographical representation. Co-Chairs must respect the impartiality and independence required of WHO. In performing their work, Co-Chairs serve in their personal capacities and may not seek or accept instructions from any Government or from any authority external to the Organization. They must be free of any real, potential or apparent conflicts of interest. Appointments last for 3 years. TF chair persons are eligible for reappointment. TF chair persons can serve a maximum of 2 consecutive appointments.

RGHS TF Co-Chairs are to work in close collaboration to lead and manage RGHS TF groups. RGHS TF Co-Chairs will engage with RGHS Chairs on the agenda, compilation and activities of their TF groups, and provide regular updates as to progress. TF Co-Chairs are responsible for managing their respective Task Force membership engagement and ensuring the work of each group contributes to the overall RGHS agenda and strategic goals.

**Responsibilities:**

- Leading and managing their respective RGHS TF group and representing the group's membership at RGHS events and meetings; including engagement with RGHS Chairs and WHO.
- Work with TF members and RGHS Stakeholders to formulate the terms of reference (ToRs) for the TF group.
- Chair monthly meetings (minimum requirement) of TF, including working with TF members and WHO stakeholders to set the meeting agenda.
- Provide regular updates to the RGHS Chairs on the agenda, work plan, compilation and activities of the TF group.
- Work with WHO to support a collaborative WHO and RGHS working environment.
- Engage in constructive dialogue with other RGHS members, WHO experts, WHO RGHS Secretariat, RGHS Co-Chairs and RGHS TF Co-chairs.
- Work with their TF group to develop recommendations which further the RGHS objective of supporting WHO’s efforts to assist Member States to ensure maximal gains in population health and policies derived from health data, analytics, interpretation, and reporting.
- TF Co-Chairs should consult with RGHS Chairs on their respective TF Recommendations.
- RGHS TF recommendations will be put to the full group of the RGHS for consideration and discussion
- Liaising with other TFs, with support of the RGHS WHO Secretariat, and working in collaboration with other TF's to give visibility of work and ensure collaboration while avoiding unnecessary duplication.
- Support RGHS Chairs to achieve RGHS objectives and goals.
- Respond to WHO RGHS Secretariat and RGHS Chairs on information requests.
- Support WHO Secretariat by engaging on RGHS work processes and following RGHS agreed processes in a timely manner.
- Regularly review membership and identify potential new TF members
- Support the WHO Secretariat in ensuring RGHS members complete key RGHS administrative tasks e.g. confidentiality and Declaration of Interests forms.
- Respect the confidentiality of internal procedures and discussions and commit to aligning with WHO's values of trust, integrity, a commitment to excellence in health, collaboration, and compassion.

**RGHS Members**

RGHS members serve in their personal capacities to represent the broad range of expertise, skills and disciplines relevant to methodological and data issues, including the generation, analysis, use, interpretation, and dissemination of global health statistics. RGHS Members participate in the work of the RGHS by presenting their personal views, and/or the policies of their organization, by engaging with other Members' views through RGHS work activities and Task Force working groups (sub-groups of the RGHS).

Members are appointed to serve for a period of 3 years and shall be eligible for reappointment. RGHS 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 the Organization. They must be free of any real, potential or apparent conflicts of interest. Membership reflects geographical and gender balance as well as different settings, like scientific, national LMIC, national HIC, and international.

**Responsibilities:**

- Complete confidentiality and declaration of interests forms on their appointment, and update forms in accordance with any evolving individual circumstances. RGHS 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.
- Actively participate in the work of the RGHS by presenting their personal views and/or the policies of their organization, including in teleconferences, interaction over email, requests to review documentation, and TF working group meeting and activates.
- Support RGHS Co-Chairs to achieve RGHS objectives and goals
- Support TF Co-chairs to achieve TF workplans
- Engage in constructive dialogue with other RGHS members, WHO experts, WHO RGHS Secretariat, RGHS Co-Chairs and RGHS TF Co-chairs.
- Respond to WHO RGHS Secretariat, RGHS Co-Chairs and RGHS Co-Chairs on information requests.
- Support WHO Secretariat by engaging on RGHS work processes and following RGHS agreed processes in a timely manner.
- Assist the WHO RGHS Secretariat by providing updated contact details and professional biographical information as required.
- Respect the confidentiality of internal procedures and discussions and commit to aligning with **WHO’s values** of trust, integrity, a commitment to excellence in health, collaboration, and compassion.
- Work collaboratively with all RGHS stakeholders to develop recommendations which further the RGHS objective of supporting WHO’s efforts to assist Member States to ensure maximal gains in population health and policies derived from health data, analytics, interpretation, and reporting.

**Outside Observers:**

RGHS Co-Chairs and RGHS TF Co-Chairs, in consultation with WHO, may invite external individuals from time to time to attend RGHS meetings, or TF Meetings, as presenters, TF members, or “observers”. These individuals may be invited either in their personal capacity, or as representatives from a governmental institution / intergovernmental organization, or from a non-state actor. Individuals may be asked to present their personal views and/or the policies of their organization. They will not participate in the process of adopting decisions and recommendations of the RGHS.

WHO may request these individuals to complete a confidentiality undertaking and a Declaration of Interest form prior to attending a session of the RGHS. Invitations to observers attending as representatives from non-state actors will be
subject to internal due diligence and conflict of interest considerations in accordance with FENSA. Individuals shall normally attend meetings of the AG at their own expense and be responsible for making all arrangements in that regard.

Role of WHO in RGHS

Role of the RGHS Secretariat:
The role of the RGHS Secretariat is to manage and provide, high-level strategic oversight and co-ordination support to Chairs, co-Chairs, members, observers and internal liaisons. The Secretariat supports WHO's commitment to working collaboratively with world-class expertise, tools, technologies and partnerships, to develop, uphold and ensure high global standards of data collection, processing, synthesis and analysis, to support countries.

Responsibilities:
- Manage the RGHS Management Mechanism.
- Support WHO leadership and RGHS Chairs in defining, managing and actioning the RGHS workplan.
- Update WHO Leadership (ADG and Director of DNA) on RGHS activates.
- Monitor RGHS TF deliverables.
- High Level support for RGHS Meetings and events, including management and set up of RGHS TF Monthly Meetings and co-ordination and management of RGHS Annual and Bi-annual meetings.
- Provide secretariat support to RGHS Chairs and high-level support to RGHS TF Co-Chairs.
- High level management of the DDI Liaison co-ordination mechanism.
- Stakeholder management and liaison.

Role of DDI Liaison:
The role of the DDI Liaison's is to assist the WHO RGHS Secretariat in the management of the RGHS process, by providing subject matter expertise and co-ordination of relevant internal WHO stakeholders. Responsible for managing and coordinating aligned WHO policy advice to RGHS stakeholders and supporting WHO efforts towards a coherent and principled vision, and practice, of data collection, analysis, dissemination and use.

Responsibilities:
- Support WHO Secretariat in the management of RGHS TF, including providing high level secretariat support for TF sub-groups.
- Support WHO Secretariat in defining, managing and actioning the RGHS workplan.
- Support RGHS TF Co-Chairs and TF members to understand the work of WHO.
- Engage in RGHS meetings and events to provide technical advice and subject matter expertise on WHO activities.
- Co-ordinate with technical areas within WHO to ensure they are engaged in the work of the RGHS and that WHO has aligned WHO positioning, and/or identify gaps which would benefit from RGHS expertise.
- Work collaboratively with all RGHS stakeholders to further the RGHS objective of supporting WHO’s efforts to assist Member States to ensure maximal gains in population health and policies derived from health data, analytics, interpretation, and reporting.
- DDI liaison's should balance the need to communicate current WHO capabilities and activates with the need to be open to outside expertise, advice and constructive feedback.

Role of WHO Technical Areas:
Role is to provide technical expertise on WHO programs and activities. Responsible for working with DDI liaisons to ensure WHO provides coordinated input and advice to the RGHS. Engage with the work of the RGHS in support of WHO's mission to uphold and ensure high global standards of data collection, processing, synthesis and analysis; including WHO
efforts towards a coherent and principled vision and practice of data collection, analysis, dissemination and use.

Responsibilities:

- Engage in RGHS TF meetings and work, where required (as informed by DDI Liaisons)
- Provide advice and expertise on WHO technical program areas
- Work with DDI Liaisons to provide coordinated and aligned WHO positioning- and/ or advice where WHO should seek to fill gaps or could benefit from RGHS expertise.
- Work collaboratively with all RGHS stakeholders to further the RGHS objective of supporting WHO’s efforts to assist Member States to ensure maximal gains in population health and policies derived from health data, analytics, interpretation, and reporting.
- WHO Technical areas should balance the need to communicate current WHO capabilities, policies and practices with the need to listen to outside expertise, advice and constructive feedback.