

Ref.: C.L.34.2020

The World Health Organization (WHO) presents its compliments to Member States and Associate Members and has the honour to refer to World Health Assembly resolution WHA73.1 (2020) on COVID-19 response, in particular operative paragraph 9(10) ... *“to initiate, at the earliest appropriate moment, and in consultation with Member States, a stepwise process of impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation, including using existing mechanisms, as appropriate, to review experience gained and lessons learned from the WHO-coordinated international health response to COVID-19 – including (i) the effectiveness of the mechanisms at WHO’s disposal; (ii) the functioning of the International Health Regulations (2005) and the status of implementation of the relevant recommendations of previous IHR Review Committees; (iii) WHO’s contribution to United Nations-wide efforts; and (iv) the actions of WHO and their timelines pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic – and to make recommendations to improve capacity for global pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response, including through strengthening, as appropriate, the WHO Health Emergencies Programme.”*

... WHO is pleased to attach a letter from the co-chairs of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPR), former President of Liberia Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and former Prime Minister of New Zealand Helen Clark, regarding the opportunity for Member States to provide comments on the Terms of Reference for the IPPR.

The World Health Organization takes this opportunity to renew to Member States and Associate Members the assurance of its highest consideration.

GENEVA, 19 August 2020

... ENCL.: (1)



Independent panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response

Terms of Reference for the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response

As co-chairs of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPR), we wish to thank the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) for placing his trust in us to lead this impartial, independent and comprehensive review of the WHO-coordinated international health response to COVID-19, in line with resolution WHA73.1 and present our compliments to WHO Member States.

We are honoured to be part of this critical process and opportunity and look forward to continuing to hear from Member States during the process. Their experiences and suggestions are critical to this process.

As part of that, we invite WHO Member States to comment on the attached Terms of Reference for the IPPR. Comments should be sent to the email address Secretariat@ipppr.org by Friday, 28 August 2020.

Following consideration of these comments, the Terms of Reference will be finalized after discussion at the first meeting of the IPPR in September.

Further details on the Panel's proposed programme of work, including opportunities for Member State consultations and other relevant details, will be circulated in due course.

The Co-chairs of the IPPR, Her Excellency Ms Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the Right Honourable Ms Helen Clark, take the opportunity to renew to Member States the assurance of their highest consideration.

MONROVIA and AUCKLAND, 19 August 2020

Independent panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response

Terms of Reference

1. The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken the foundations of global health security and resilience and challenged the readiness and responsiveness of the international community to address unforeseen global health threats collectively. It has also demonstrated the indiscriminate impact of this global health “shock” on all aspects of human life – social, political, economic and environmental – across geographies and across the continuum from the international, regional, national, and subnational levels to communities, households and individuals, thus reinforcing the interconnected nature of health emergency preparedness and response. It has also revealed the impact of inequalities within and between societies, as well as the importance of resilient health systems.
2. In May 2020, the Seventy-third World Health Assembly passed resolution WHA73.1, which requested the Director-General:

“to initiate, at the earliest appropriate moment, and in consultation with Member States, a stepwise process of impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation, including using existing mechanisms,¹ as appropriate, to review experience gained and lessons learned from the WHO-coordinated international health response to COVID-19 – including (i) the effectiveness of the mechanisms at WHO’s disposal; (ii) the functioning of the International Health Regulations (2005) and the status of implementation of the relevant recommendations of previous IHR Review Committees; (iii) WHO’s contribution to United Nations-wide efforts; and (iv) the actions of WHO and their timelines pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic – and to make recommendations to improve capacity for global pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response, including through strengthening, as appropriate, the WHO Health Emergencies Programme.”

3. In July 2020, the Director-General took the initiative to establish an Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPR) to carry out an impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation of the WHO-coordinated international health response to COVID-19 as one important step and measure to implement the request in the WHA resolution.
4. The aim of the IPPR is to provide an evidence-based path for the future, grounded in lessons of the past and the present, identifying the most urgent needs and actions required to ensure that the world can now and in the future effectively address health threats at national and global levels. The IPPR’s objectives are both of a formative and a forward-looking nature; they are:

¹ Including an IHR Review Committee and the Independent Oversight and Advisory Committee for the WHO Health Emergencies Programme.

5. (i) The Panel will not duplicate nor validate either previous work undertaken in this domain, including in the context of decades of pandemic preparedness and response planning, or previous independent reviews that have aimed to strengthen the world's preparedness and response abilities. As stated in the WHA resolution there will be a "step wise" process, including consideration of other reviews and complementary inputs.
6. The Panel will focus on providing a fresh assessment of the challenges ahead, based on insights and lessons learned from previous health emergencies with a particular focus on this COVID-19 pandemic, and will recommend the changes required if these challenges are to be met effectively in the future.
7. Specifically, the Panel will review experience gained and lessons learned from the international health response to COVID-19 as coordinated by WHO and specifically assess:
 - (i) the overall relevance and effectiveness of the international health response to the COVID-19 pandemic;
 - (ii) the functioning of the International Health Regulations (2005) and the status of implementation of the relevant recommendations of previous IHR Review Committees;¹
 - (iii) the effectiveness of the mechanisms at WHO's disposal and the actions of WHO and their timelines pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic;² and
 - (iv) WHO's contribution to United Nations-wide efforts.

The panel will also:

- (v) make recommendations to improve capacity for global pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response, including through strengthening, as appropriate, the WHO Health Emergencies Programme.
8. Furthermore, with a view to ensuring that the world is equipped to prepare, prevent, detect and respond to global health emergencies, including epidemic- and pandemic-prone diseases, the Panel will review the range and nature of the challenges we face, and are likely to face in the future, including the wider impact of health threats to societies. To this end, the Panel will:
 - (i) examine global health threats and provide an analysis of future challenges to global health security and health systems;
 - (ii) based on the above recommend clear, practical and potentially new measures for ensuring effective action, including potential implications of any changes for the international system, governments and other actors.

¹ For this particular objective, the IPPR will mainly be informed by the findings and outputs of the IHR Review Committee.

² On this, the IPPR will also be informed by the work and outputs of the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme.

9. The Panel's work will cover the broader field of global health security. Hence it will extend its analysis and recommendations to other issues and institutions, including economic and social ones, to the extent that they have a direct bearing on future threats to global health and security.
10. The Panel was established by the Director-General of WHO through the appointments of the co-chairs, H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the Rt. Hon. Helen Clark. The panel will provide through its co-chairs directly to the WHO governing bodies progress reports and a final report no later than 1 May 2021.
11. The Panel will work independently and have its own brand and its own Secretariat to support the work. The Panel will work in an open and transparent fashion and seek best possible advice from experts across the world. The Panel will share information about its work and progress on a regular basis with the Member States and other relevant partners.