Foreword
Since our last joint Newsletter, the two processes have continued to progress with a view to submitting tangible outcomes to the 77th World Health Assembly (WHA) in May 2024. There is a common understanding that both processes have reached a critical juncture and that continued engagement by all Member States and relevant stakeholders will be key for success.

The INB and WGIHR Bureaux have taken active part in a number of high-level political fora, starting with the G20 and culminating with the UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response, which issued important political declarations in support of the work of the INB and the WGIHR.

With respect to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body to draft and negotiate a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (the INB), the Bureau, supported by the Secretariat, has developed a proposal for a negotiating text as requested by the INB at its September 2023 meeting. The proposed text takes into account guidance provided by WHO Member States since the fourth meeting of the INB, including the helpful outcomes from the informal meetings of the drafting group. The Bureau reiterates its sincere gratitude for the dedication shown by all Member States, in particular the leadership of the Member States that have co-facilitated these informal meetings. The proposal for a negotiating text will be presented to the INB at its seventh meeting, starting in November 2023.

The Working Group on Amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) (WGIHR) continued its work on discussing and negotiating proposed amendments in preparation for and during the fifth meeting of the WGIHR, which was held on 2-6 October 2023. The WGIHR completed the second reading of the proposed amendments, and also concluded that more work is needed to finalize the package of amendments. Therefore, the WGIHR agreed to continue its work between January and May 2024 in order to submit the final package to the 77th WHA, per its mandate.

A. The INB

About the INB Bureau
The INB Bureau welcomed a new Bureau member from the Western Pacific Ambassador Kozo Honsei (Japan) who replaces Mr Kazuho Taguchi (Japan), whose contribution was appreciated by the INB during its sixth meeting in July 2023.

Status of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body process:
Progress made in July-September 2023

At the sixth meeting of the INB (INB6), which was held from 17–21 July 2023, the INB, in the form of a Drafting Group, considered the remaining articles of the Bureau’s text. The INB agreed to continue intersessional informal meetings on Articles 9, 12 and 13 for Drafting Group participants, including during the meeting of the INB Drafting Group on 4-6 September 2023. In addition, the INB decided that further discussion on Articles 4 and 5 – to be jointly co-facilitated by India, United Republic of Tanzania and the United Kingdom, and Article 11 – to be co-facilitated by Colombia, the Philippines and Saudi Arabia - be held in informal meetings.

A procedural report was discussed on 21 July (in a plenary meeting) and subsequently posted on the governing bodies section of the WHO website. The plenary sessions of the INB6 are available for viewing on the WHO website.

As decided by the INB, the 4-6 September 2023 meeting of the INB Drafting Group included informal meetings on the aforementioned Articles. The co-facilitators reported back on progress, with the understanding that the progress achieved during informal meetings is without prejudice to the right of any Member State to present textual proposals.

Informal meetings on selected articles were held as follows:

- On 15 September 2023, three informal meetings were held, including on Articles 4 (Pandemic prevention and public health surveillance) and 5 (Strengthening pandemic prevention and preparedness through a One Health approach), on Article 12 (Access and benefit-sharing) and on Article 11 (Co-development and transfer of technology and know-how).

- On 18 September 2023, an additional two informal meetings were held on Article 11, and on Articles 4 and 5 respectively.

- A resumed meeting of the drafting group was held on 22 September to take stock of the progress achieved through the informal meetings.

Our next steps include:

- At its seventh meeting, the INB will consider a proposal for negotiating text, which has been developed by the Bureau, based on the discussions of the INB from its fourth, fifth, and sixth meetings, as well as the meeting of the INB Drafting Group, including its informal meetings, and the reports of the co-facilitators of those informal meetings. The advance unedited English version of the
text was shared with WHO Member States and relevant stakeholders on 16 October, and translated versions of the text will be shared no later than 30 October 2023.

- A briefing on the proposal for negotiating text was held on 27 October for Member States and relevant stakeholders, which allowed to discuss a proposal from the INB Bureau on the conduct of the seventh meeting of the INB.
- The seventh meeting of the INB will take place from 6-10 November and 4-6 December 2023, to allow for a comprehensive presentation and consideration of the negotiating text.

Testimonies from the INB Bureau and from WHO Member States about the INB
The INB Bureau continues to share information with you through its dedicated page:

Recent work from INB Bureau Members includes op-eds in the Lancet (WHO pandemic accord: full adherence to the principle of sovereignty) and the Journal of Medical Internet Research (Effective Infodemic Management: A Substantive Article of the Pandemic Accord).

The INB website is also provides space for some of the WHO Member States that constitute the INB as they were willing to explain to us why the pandemic accord matters to them and to us all.

The WGIHR

About the Bureau of the Working Group on Amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) (WGIHR)
The WGIHR Bureau welcomes Ambassador Achsanul Habib of Indonesia as a new Bureau member. Ambassador Habib represents the South-East Asia region and replaces Ambassador Grata Werdaningtyas, whose term in Geneva ended at the conclusion of WGIHR4.

Why the IHR are a critical piece of the PPPR architecture; how were they used during COVID-19 and how are they used each day?
The IHR are the global legal agreement to protect people from disease outbreaks with risk of international spread. Since the entry into force of the IHR in 2007, governments have collaborated with the common goal of protecting people’s health, recognizing that communicable diseases do not respect borders and are a risk to people worldwide. During the COVID-19 pandemic, IHR allowed for the rapid sharing of information about the new pathogen among States Parties, for the issuance of temporary recommendations in response to the public health emergency of international concern, and for the monitoring of health measures taken by countries in response to the pandemic.

The IHR are used on a daily basis for the notification and verification of outbreaks, for raising the alarm in case of public health emergencies of international concern, and for continuously building and maintaining core capacities for surveillance and public health response.

The amendments to the IHR have been triggered by Member States of the WHO at the same time as the negotiation of a pandemic accord as a way to further strengthen the global governance for preparedness and response to public health events with risk of international spread.
Status of the WGIHR process

Preparing for WGIHR5

At the fourth meeting of the WGIHR (WGIHR4), which was held on 24-28 July 2023, the WGIHR began its work through an initial discussion on the proposed amendments held in open session in the presence of relevant stakeholders. The WGIHR then transitioned into a Drafting Session and proceeded with a discussion on proposed amendments related to the following topics:

- **Part I – Definitions, purpose and scope, and responsible authorities:** Article 4 Responsible authorities;

- **Part II – Information and public health response:** Article 5 Surveillance (paragraph 4 and new paragraphs 5), Article 6 Notification, Article 8 Consultation, Article 9 Other reports, Article 10 Verification, Article 11 Provision of information by WHO, Article 12 Determination of a public health emergency of international concern and Annex 2 Decision instrument for the assessment and notification of events that may constitute a public health emergency of international concern, and new Annex 2;

- **Part III – Recommendations:** Articles 15 Temporary recommendations, Article 16 Standing recommendations, Article 17 Criteria for recommendations, and Article 18 Recommendations with respect to persons, baggage, cargo, containers, conveyances, good and postal parcels.

- **Part V – Public health measures:** Chapter II The Emergency Committee - Articles 48 Terms of reference and composition and Article 49 Procedure.

As with previous WGIHR meetings, the Working Group agreed to flexible and innovative intersessional arrangements in preparation for the fifth meeting of the Working Group (WGIHR5) held on 2-6 October 2023, including:

- Encouraging discussions between proponents of various proposed amendments, with a view to presenting any outcomes for the consideration of the drafting group; and

- Organizing intersessional briefings in a hybrid format, which were open to all drafting group members and relevant stakeholders, as well as joint intersessional work with the INB, covering Articles and Annexes discussed during WGIHR4.

Progress made during WGIHR5

During the **fifth meeting of the WGIHR (WGIHR5)**, WHO Member States and relevant stakeholders took stock of progress on articles considered at previous meetings of the WGIHR and discussed at intersessional briefings. A drafting session was then held to address the following articles:

- **Part I – Definitions, purpose and scope, principles and responsible authorities:** Article
1 Definitions, Article 2 Purpose and scope and Article 3 Principles;

- Part IV – Points of entry: Article 19 General obligations;

- Part V - Public health measures: Article 23 Health measures on arrival and departure; Article 24 Conveyance operators, Article 27 Affected conveyances and Article 28 Ships and aircraft at points of entry; Article 31 Health measures relating to entry of travellers, and Annexes 3 and 4.

- Part VI – health documents: Article 35 General rule and Article 36, Certificates of vaccination or other prophylaxis;

- Part VIII – General provisions: Article 42 Implementation of health measures, Article 43 Additional health measures and Article 45 Treatment of personal data;

- Annexes 6 Vaccination, prophylaxis and related certificates and Annex 8 Model of maritime declaration of health; and

- Part X – Final provisions: Article 56 Settlement of disputes.

The WGIHR Bureau, with support from the Secretariat, developed “Co-Chairs’ proposed text” for several articles that were already considered at previous meetings of the WGIHR. The Co-Chairs’ proposed texts were considered at the WGIHR5 for the following articles:

- Article 4 Responsible authorities;

- Article 5 Surveillance (paragraph 4 and new proposals for paragraph 5);

- Article 18 Recommendations with respect to persons, baggage, cargo, containers, conveyances, good and postal parcels; and

- Articles 48 Terms of reference and composition and Article 49 Procedures included in Chapter II The Emergency Committee.

Finally, the Drafting Group discussed a consolidated proposal of proposed amendments to Article 13A Equitable Access to Health Products, Technologies and Know-How for Public Health Response, as well as Article 8 Consultation.

Next steps

During the closing plenary of WGIHR5, which was publicly webcast, the WGIHR agreed on the way forward. In addition to extending previous arrangements regarding intersessional work, i.e. discussion between proponents of amendments, intersessional briefings and facilitated informal consultations, it was agreed that the Bureau with the assistance of the Secretariat, would prepare draft text proposals based on the discussions so far, for consideration by the WGIHR at their next meeting on 7-8 December. A WGIHR informal consultation is scheduled on 20 November 2023 on Articles 44 and 44A, Annexes 1 and 10 to be facilitated by Saudi Arabia (hybrid – TBC).

The WGIHR also agreed to continue its work between January and May 2024. WGIHR will hold formal meetings on 5-9 February 2024 and 22-26 April 2024. The Director-General will submit to the 77th Health Assembly the package of amendments agreed by the Working Group. More information is available in the report of WGIHR5.
C. Topics of common interest for both the INB and the WGIHR

Ongoing coordination between the INB and the WGIHR

Mindful of the mandates of the INB and the WGIHR to coordinate their work, the Bureaux of the INB and the WGIHR continue to hold regular joint meetings.

As agreed during INBS and WGIHR3, a joint INB and WGIHR plenary meeting was held on Friday 21 July and Monday 24 July 2023. Meeting participants included Member States, Associate Members, regional economic integration organizations, and relevant stakeholders. The significance of this first-ever joint meeting for the two processes was noted by participants, who welcomed continued joint work as appropriate, mindful of the capacity constraints of all delegations and the respective mandates of the two processes. Member States expressed that the common aim within both the INB and the WGIHR to protect lives and livelihoods. Participants also noted the importance of all work streams on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response (PPPR), including the UN high-level meeting in New York. It was also discussed that INB and IHR processes should both be evidence-based and grounded in technical considerations. Solidary and equity are important cross cutting themes across both processes.

In addition, a joint INB – WGIHR related briefing session on the Public Health Alert – Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) - pandemic continuum, including definitions, criteria and the process for determining each was held on Tuesday 12 September 2023 to facilitate discussions among Member States. This discussion also helped inform deliberations on the proposed amendments to Article 12 of the International Health Regulations (2005).

An INB – WGIHR joint briefing on the financing landscape for public health emergencies took place on Wednesday 27 September, in the presence of relevant stakeholders, to provide Members States with an update on the current financial landscape for public health emergencies preparedness and response.

The two topics are extremely important to the INB and WGIHR processes and both Bureaux are working closely with the Secretariat to propose a way forward, taking the proposals of WGIHR and INB Members into account.

Finally, a joint briefing with the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (GPMB) was held on Wednesday 25 October. It included a briefing on the GPMB 2023 Report on the State of the World’s Preparedness, as well as a presentation of key findings, recommendations and next steps of GPMB report that are most relevant to the INB and IHRWG, and a discussion of the relevance of GPMB recommendations to the draft Negotiating Text.

Scheduled activities include on 21 November a Joint INB-WGIHR briefing on Public health alert – PHEIC – pandemic continuum, including definitions, criteria and the process for determining each (to be held virtually) and another Joint INB-WGIHR briefing on financing for public health emergencies will be scheduled at a later date.
On 20 September 2023, the Political Declaration, approved by the 78th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), was the result of negotiations under the able leadership of co-facilitators Ambassadors Gilad Erdan of Israel and Omar Hilale of Morocco. This historical declaration marks the first year that pandemics are the theme of a high-level meeting during the UNGA, and “encouraged the INB to conclude negotiations on a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, prioritizing the need for equity, with a view to adoption under Article 19, or under other provisions of the WHO Constitution as may be deemed appropriate by the INB, with respect to the timeframes set out in WHA Decision SSA2(5) OP(5)”. It also “encouraged the WGIHR to continue its work on consideration of proposed targeted amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005), with respect to the timeframes set out in WHA75(9) OP2”. Furthermore, Member States expressed “their strong resolve to urge the sustainable, affordable, fair, equitable, effective and timely access to medical countermeasures, including vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics and other health products and call on the World Health Organization to coordinate this with relevant partners, ensuring coherence with the ongoing discussions of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body and the Working Group on Amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) in Geneva” and “recognized the necessity of a One Health approach. Finally, the UNGA decided to convene a high-level meeting on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response in 2026.

The INB Bureau and the WGIHR Bureau were represented at the HLM on PPPR by Mr Roland Driece, Co-Chair of the INB, and Dr Ashley Bloomfield, Co-Chair of the WGIHR. They welcomed the unprecedented high-level attention given to the issue during the UNGA through a dedicated HLM, and they were encouraged by the strong support for the two processes. The HLM provided a renewed focus for the international community to address PPPR with urgency and ensure successful outcomes of the INB and the WGIHR processes in Geneva. The mobilization must continue at the highest level for success.

Further information can be found on the [page dedicated to the HLM](#) on the WHO website.

**Outreach by INB and WGIHR Bureaux members**

Members of both Bureaux are actively sharing information with and gathering input from their WHO Regions and beyond.

Bureau members have actively participated in the Regional Committee of their respective regions, including Precious Matsoso, Co-Chair of INB during the 73rd Regional Committee for Africa, held on 28 August-1 September 2023, and Colin Mcliff, Member of the WGIHR Bureau during the 75th Regional Committee for the Americas, held on 25–29 September 2023. Furthermore, WGIHR Co-Chair Ashley Bloomfield and Ambassador Honsei, Bureau Member of the INB, participated in the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific, briefing Ministers, Heads of Delegation and other delegates during a dedicated dinner session on PPPR on 16 October.
At the invitation of the Indian G20 presidency, both INB Co-chair Roland Drience and WGIHR Co-chair Dr Ashley Bloomfield addressed the G20 health ministers during their gathering in Gandhinagar. Mr Drience spoke to the state of play around the creation of a pandemic instrument. Mr. Drience stressed that the time till May next year is very short and asked the ministers not to lose the sense of urgency. Additionally, he noted: “Through global collaboration, we can enhance the production and distribution of medicines which will assist in tackling both the crises as severe as the pandemic and as commonplace as the post-pandemic challenges.” Dr Bloomfield briefed Ministers on progress with updating the International Health Regulations (2005), thanking them for their support to date and encouraging their ongoing commitment to completing the process by May 2024 and fully implementing the updated regulations as soon as possible.

Ministers of Health issued a Declaration, which expressed support in favour of the two processes.

Furthermore, on 9 September, the G20 New Delhi Leaders’ Declaration was adopted, in which G20 Leaders said that they looked forward to a successful outcome of the ongoing negotiations at the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) for an ambitious, legally binding WHO convention, agreement or other international instruments on pandemic PPR (WHO CA+) by May 2024, as well as amendments to better implement the International Health Regulations (2005).

What is the plan of upcoming events?

The INB and the WGIHR timelines are indicated below, as reflected in document A/INB/5/31 and which will be posted on the WGIHR website.

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<td>7-8 December 2023</td>
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1 The schedule of upcoming INB meetings was agreed by the INB at its third meeting, on 5-7 December 2022
How can stakeholders be engaged in the future?

To complement their work, the INB and WGIHR Bureaus are working to organize informational briefing sessions open to all the stakeholders of the INB and the WGIHR, including Member States and relevant stakeholders. Therefore, please watch out for more invitations to contribute.

Additionally, you may want to check regularly the following key resources:

- [WHO | Intergovernmental Negotiating Body](https://www.who.int)
- [Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) (who.int)](https://www.who.int)
- Questions and Answers about the [Pandemic prevention, preparedness and response accord (who.int)](https://www.who.int)
- [WHO | Working Group on Amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005)](https://www.who.int)
- [Q&A: International Health Regulations: amendments (who.int)](https://www.who.int)
- [Webpage of the High-Level Meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response](https://www.who.int)

Next newsletter:

We plan on issuing the next Newsletter in early 2024, and we look forward to sharing our progress with you.