

Review Committee on the functioning of the IHR (2005) during the COVID-19 pandemic

Mission Briefing, Thursday 27 August 2020

Background

- The Review Committee is established by the Director-General in line with Article 50 of the IHR (2005), with the following functions (*inter alia*):
 - (a) make technical recommendations to the Director-General regarding amendments to the Regulations;
 - (b) provide technical advice to the Director-General on any matter referred to it by the Director-General regarding the functioning of these Regulations.
- The Review Committee has been convened by the WHO Director-General on three occasions since the enter into force of the IHR:
 - for the Functioning of the IHR in relation to pandemic Influenza A(H1N1) (2010-2011);
 - Second extensions for establishing national public health capacities and on IHR implementation (2014);
 - and the Role of the IHR in the Ebola outbreak and response (2015-2016).

Context and mandate for the IHR Review Committee on Covid-19

The World Health Assembly Resolution **WHA73.1, OP 9, sub-para (10)**: “Request the Director-General [...] to initiate, [...] 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.”

*including an **IHR Review Committee** and the IOAC

Scope of work for the IHR Review Committee on Covid-19

This IHR Review Committee is expected to review the functioning of the IHR during COVID-19 pandemic with reference to IHR provisions, as appropriate, related to, but not limited to:

- outbreak alert, verification and risk assessment, information sharing and communication;
- international coordination and collaboration, including the role of the National IHR Focal Points;
- Emergency Committee's working modalities, and declaration of a public health emergency of international concern, including the need for intermediate level of alert;
- additional health measures implemented by States Parties in relation to international travel;
- IHR core capacities implementation and reporting, including the possible establishment of peer review processes;
- progress made on the implementation of recommendations from previous IHR Review Committees.

The IHR Review Committee membership

- Members are appointed by the Director-General and selected from the IHR Roster of Experts or other WHO expert advisory panels, with a broad mix of expertise, practical experience and backgrounds, from both developed and developing countries, and with adequate geographical and gender representation.
- Review Committee members are not WHO staff, nor do they receive any remuneration from WHO for their contributions to the review process.
- Review Committee members shall act as international experts serving WHO exclusively; in that capacity, they may not request or receive instructions from any government or authority external to WHO.

Conduct of business

- The IHR Review Committee will conduct its work in open and closed deliberative meetings. Closed deliberative meetings will allow for extensive discussions, deliberations, and drafting of the reports.
- Decisions of the IHR Review Committee shall be taken by a majority of the members present and voting.
- The Director-General shall invite Member States, the United Nations and its specialized agencies and other relevant intergovernmental organizations or nongovernmental organizations in official relations with WHO to designate representatives to attend the Committee. They shall not have the right to vote.
- The IHR Review Committee provides its views and advice to the Director-General and shall submit its final report to the Director-General who shall communicate its views and advice to the Health Assembly or the Executive Board for their consideration and action.

Tentative timeline – IHR Review Committee

- **8-9 September 2020** – First opened meeting of the IHR Review Committee
 - Deliberative closed meetings
- **November 2020 (TBD)** – reporting to the resumed WHA73 (TBC - depending on progress made)
 - Deliberative closed meetings
- *Sharing findings – IPPR/IOAC/IHR RC – as necessary*
- **January 2021 (TBD)** – reporting to the 148 Executive Board (TBC)
- **May 2021 (TBD)** – reporting to the WHA74 (TBC)