

Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response

The Executive Board, having considered the report on the Standing Committee on Health Emergency (Pandemic) Prevention, Preparedness and Response;¹ and taking into account decision EB150(6) (2022), including the request to the Director-General to report on the functioning and impact of the Standing Committee and submit the results and proposed recommendations based thereon for the consideration of the Executive Board at its 156th session in January 2025,

Decided:

- (1) in accordance with Rule 18 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, to establish a Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response;
- (2) to approve the terms of reference set out in the Annex to this decision; and
- (3) that the Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response will hold its first meeting after each WHO region has nominated its members and the Executive Board formally appoints the members through a silence procedure, ideally before the end of October 2022.

¹ Document EB151/3.

ANNEX

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH EMERGENCY PREVENTION, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Composition and attendance

1. The Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (“the Standing Committee”) shall be composed of 14 members, two from each region, selected from among Executive Board members, as well as the Chair and a Vice-Chair of the Board, ex officio, in line with the principles set out in Rule 18 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board reflecting a balanced representation of developed and developing countries. Members of the Standing Committee shall serve for two years.
2. There shall be two office-bearers: a Chair and a Vice-Chair, who shall be appointed among the Committee members, in line with the principles set out in Rule 18 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, and shall serve for a one-year term.
3. The Chair and the Vice-Chair, in collective consultation with the Director-General, may invite observers¹ to attend a meeting of the Standing Committee without the right to vote if they consider that this would enhance the work of the Standing Committee on a specific item or items on the agenda of the meeting. Furthermore, the Chair and the Vice-Chair, in consultation with the Director-General, may invite experts to attend a meeting of the Standing Committee to provide advice, as appropriate. Members of the Standing Committee can also propose the invitation of relevant experts.
4. Member States in whose territory an event arises shall be invited to present their views to the Standing Committee.

Functions

5. The Standing Committee shall act as follows:
 - (a) In the event a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) is determined pursuant to the International Health Regulations (2005): Consider information provided by the Director-General about the event that has been determined to constitute a PHEIC as well as information and needs expressed by the Member State in whose territory an event arises and, as appropriate, provide guidance to the Executive Board and advice to the Director-General, through the Executive Board, including through a special session as needed, on matters regarding health emergency prevention, preparedness and response, and immediate capacities of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme.

¹ For the purposes of attending and addressing the Standing Committee reference to “observers” is understood as referring to the Holy See; Palestine; Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance; the Order of Malta; the International Committee of the Red Cross; the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; the Inter-Parliamentary Union; the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations with which WHO has established effective relations under Article 70 of the Constitution; the European Union; and any other body so authorized for these purposes by the Executive Board.

(b) Outside of the cases where a PHEIC is determined pursuant to the International Health Regulations (2005): Review, provide guidance and, as appropriate, make recommendations to the Executive Board regarding the strengthening and oversight of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme and for effective health emergency prevention, preparedness and response.

6. In performing its functions, the Standing Committee shall take into account the work of other relevant WHO instruments and bodies, as appropriate. The Standing Committee shall work in a manner respectful of and complementary to the technical scientific advice provided by the Emergency Committee in accordance with the International Health Regulations (2005).

Conduct of sessions

7. The Standing Committee shall meet at least twice annually for the conduct of its regular work. Decisions on the format¹ of the meeting shall be made by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee, in consultation with the Director-General.

8. In the event a PHEIC is determined pursuant to the International Health Regulations (2005), the Director-General shall convene an extraordinary meeting of the Standing Committee as soon as reasonably practicable, and ideally within 24 hours following the determination of the PHEIC.

9. The Executive Board may decide to convene extraordinary meetings of the Standing Committee in order to deal with urgent matters that fall within its terms of reference and are deemed necessary to be considered between its regular meetings.

10. The Standing Committee shall conduct its business on the basis of consensus and transparency. The Standing Committee will provide a report of each of its meetings to the Executive Board. In the event of inability to reach consensus, the difference in views shall be reported to the Board.

11. The meetings of the Standing Committee shall be open for all Member States.

Second meeting, 30 May 2022
EB151/SR/2

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¹ In person, virtual or hybrid.