

Intergovernmental Negotiating Body to draft and negotiate a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (“INB”)

Informal, focused consultations, to be held Sept-Oct 2022

WHITE PAPER

At its second meeting, the INB decided that the INB Bureau would conduct informal, focused consultations (“IFCs”), open to all Member States¹ and relevant stakeholders, on selected key issues, including with experts, as invited by the Bureau. This white paper from the INB Bureau provides information on the arrangements for the IFCs.

Objectives

In advancing the current working draft (document A/INB/2/3) into a “Conceptual zero draft” to be discussed at the third meeting of the INB (“INB3”) in December 2022, the IFCs will be one of the four inputs that contribute to its development. The objectives of the IFCs are to:

- Provide a forum for inter-active discussion among Member States, relevant stakeholders and subject matter experts to advance understanding of the issues and concepts raised by the working draft;
- Inform the development of the Conceptual zero draft for INB3, including from the technical and policy perspectives; and
- Share knowledge and expertise, including to inform Member States in their work relating to the INB.

Principles and approach

In conducting the IFCs, the Bureau will build on best practices of prior similar events, including, in particular, the intersessional informal sessions (“deep dives”) held by the Working Group on Strengthening WHO Preparedness and Response to Health Emergencies (WGPR). The Bureau will also conduct the IFCs in an iterative process, learning from experience as the IFCs proceed.

IFC sessions: topics, dates, and times

The Bureau plans to hold four IFCs, as follows:

	Topic(s)	Date	Time (CET)
<i>First IFC</i>	<u>Legal matters</u> , including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relationship between the Pandemic agreement and other instruments, notably IHR• Sovereignty• Institutional arrangements and alternatives• Structural and framework considerations• Ratification and/or accession• Entry into force	21 September	2 – 5 pm

¹ And associate members and regional economic integration organizations.

	Topic(s)	Date	Time (CET)
<i>Second IFC</i>	<p><u>Operationalizing and achieving equity,</u> including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to pandemic response products and production capacity and delivery / distribution • Access and benefit sharing, including GSD • Strengthening health systems, including the importance of UHC and PHC • Production capacity • Regulatory approvals during emergencies 	5 October	12 – 3 pm
<i>Third IFC</i>	<p><u>Intellectual property (IP), and access to pandemic response products,</u> including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and Development • Patents, and related know-how and supply chain considerations • The role of TRIPS, compulsory licensing and IP waivers 	7 October	2 – 5 pm
<i>Fourth IFC</i>	<p><u>One-Health, AMR, Climate, and Zoonosis,</u> including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-sectoral, coordinated and integrated laboratory & surveillance • Health systems’ resilience and capacities • Health and human resources, and workforce protection 	14 October	12 – 3 pm

Structure of the IFCs

All IFCs will be fully virtual. Each IFC will have two parts: 1) an interactive, moderated **round table** among independent experts where the moderator will ask questions and stimulate input from and dialog among the experts; and 2) a **discussion and reflection session**, for Member States and relevant stakeholders where questions and reflections may be sent through email or the meeting “chat” function.

It is expected that each part – **round table** and **discussion and reflection** – will be of equal time: 90 minutes each, with a short break (not exceeding 15 minutes) between.

Regarding the **round table**:

- It is expected that each round table will be comprised of up to 10 experts, each of which will make a 5 minute presentation (for example, responding to particular guiding question(s) for the IFC), with the remainder of the round table time used for a moderated discussion among the experts.
- Participating experts will be expected to take an evidence-based and scientific approach, highlighting pros, cons and considerations of their viewpoints in their presentations and discussion.

Regarding the **discussion and reflection** session:

- The moderator / chair of the IFC session will invite comments and views on the subject from Member States and relevant stakeholders, as well as facilitating an interactive discussion with the experts.
- As noted below, the guiding principle for all IFC discussions is that they do not, in any manner, prejudice the positions of Member States. In particular, the presentations of experts, as well as questions or comments related thereto, do not imply a view or position on the part of Member States. Accordingly, the INB Bureau encourages Member States to focus their questions and comments in line with the objective, as noted above, to advance understanding of the relevant issues and concepts, and to minimize, to the extent possible, general restatements of positions.
- In that regard, Member States and relevant stakeholders are encouraged to submit their questions in advance of each IFC, by email to: governanceunit@who.int with the subject line: “written question(s) for INB IFCs session [one, two three, and/ or four, as appropriate]”. Member States and relevant stakeholders will also be able to submit questions during each IFC, by email to the same address, or through the chat feature of the virtual platform.

Moderation, run of show, and conduct of the IFCs

Each IFC session will be virtual and chaired by an INB Bureau Co-Chair.

Each roundtable will be moderated by a moderator with considerable experience in similar settings and events. The moderator will frame and inspire further discussions and be “diplomatically and appropriately provocative” to encourage speakers to cover the different aspects/perspectives of the discussed issues. As the IFC sessions are informal, the intention will be to engage in free and unscripted discussion.

A concept note for each IFC session will be prepared and distributed to Member States and relevant stakeholders prior to the session; the concept notes are expected to describe the topic area, set the scene for the discussion, and provide guiding questions. Further details on each IFC, including the names of the expected speakers, experts and moderator, will also be included in the concept note, to the extent possible.

Expert participants

The INB Bureau will select the experts to participate in each IFC session. All efforts will be made to promote diversity, including, in particular, diversity of scientific viewpoints and perspectives, as well as breadth in subject-matter expertise. As appropriate, WHO Secretariat experts will also join the IFC roundtables as participants.

Operational and technical aspects of the IFC

All IFCs will be conducted in a fully virtual format, with interpretation in WHO’s official languages.

In the interest of transparency, and mindful of the public’s interest in the work of the INB, each IFC session will be publicly broadcast on the WHO website. Member States and relevant stakeholders therefore have wide latitude to inform interested parties, including at a national level, of these consultations.

Further details on the virtual participation of Member States and relevant stakeholders will be communicated in due course.

Disclaimer / understanding

Mindful of the informal nature of the IFCs and the goal of stimulating full and frank discussion, the following understandings will apply to all IFC sessions: it is understood that discussions at IFC sessions, including among participating experts, in no way prejudice the positions of Member States or any other session participants. It is further understood that any comments or questions presented by session participants, including Member States, during the IFCs do not imply a view or position of Member States or other session participants. It is also understood that expert presentations are provided solely for the consideration by Member States and are not themselves sources of input to the conceptual zero draft. The co-chairs, on behalf of the Bureau, will reiterate these understandings as each session commences.

Reporting on the IFCs

As agreed at the second meeting of the INB, a summary report from the IFCs is to be made available in advance of the third meeting of the INB.

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