

Terms of reference for the Global Health Threats Council

Purpose:

The role of the Global Health Threats Council (the Council) will be to ensure that high level political leadership and attention to pandemic prevention, preparedness and response are sustained over time in the service of a vision of *a world without pandemics*. The council will be an inclusive and legitimate voice of authority with the ability to utilise both accountability mechanisms and provide access to financing to ensure preparedness as well as response at the national, regional and global levels.

Background:

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated insufficient high-level political leadership; engagement across health, social and economic sectors; and agreement between governments. This has resulted in the failure to set coherent global strategic directions in pandemic response and link them to international agencies and regional institutions. Nor have the private sector and civil society organizations been able to contribute to strategic direction setting in an effective way.

The organic evolution of the international health system over recent decades in order to address particular health problems has resulted in pockets of major progress but also created inefficiencies resulting from unclear roles and responsibilities and an inability to leverage effectively the comparative advantages of different actors.

A key finding of the Panel is that accountability for pandemic preparedness and response has been lacking across the system. National governments are the primary duty-bearer in pandemic response, and the lack of accountability has been accompanied by a failure to learn from mistakes and take up the opportunity for learning between countries.

The Independent Panel on Pandemic Preparedness and Response concluded that a transformation of the international system for pandemic preparedness and response is needed, catalysed by political leadership at the highest level.

The commitment of Heads of State and Government to a transform of the international system for pandemic preparedness and response must go together with their commitment to lead strong and effective national, regional and global implementation. This within the framework of continued and enhanced implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The international system is the sum of national action and the connective tissue of regional and global learning, cooperation and support for filling gaps. Confidence in the collective determination to make a safer and healthier world is the force that can conquer the threat pandemics pose to humanity's future.

Functions:

- Elevate and maintain political commitment to pandemic prevention, preparedness and response over time in the service of a vision of a world without pandemics.
- Monitor progress towards the goals and targets set by WHO, as well as against potentially new scientific evidence and international legal frameworks.
- Draw the world's attention to gaps in pandemic preparedness and response through high level advocacy and reporting to the UN General Assembly, the World Health Assembly and the IMF board.
- Contribute to the mobilisation of funding and oversee the allocation of resources by the International Pandemic Financing Facility.
- Hold actors accountable including through peer recognition and pressure as well as the publishing of analytical progress status reports.

Establishment:

- The Council shall be established through a political declaration of the UN General Assembly Special Session on the COVID-19 Pandemic as an independent body. The negotiation of the declaration to be facilitated by two Member States.
- The UN General Assembly through the Resolution to appoint two Co-Chairs for the Council and the G20 shall be invited to nominate a Co-Chair.
- The Three Co-Chairs to put forward suggestions for the remaining Council members according to these Terms of Reference, for the UN General Assembly to endorse.

Membership:

The council shall consist of 18 members and 3 co-chairs and shall be composed as follows:

[Co-chairs, at least one being a woman]:

1. Nominee of UNGA #1
2. Nominee of UNGA #2
3. Nominee of G20

[Members]:

1. Two Asia Pacific Representatives
2. Two Western Europe and Other Representatives
(including North America (USA and Canada))
3. Two African Representatives
4. Two Eastern European Representatives
5. Two Latin American and Caribbean Representatives
6. Three civil society representatives
7. Three private sector representatives
8. Two prominent global citizens or experts

Duration:

Member terms will initially be either for three years, with flexibility for early termination or renewability for a second three-year term, on agreement of the co-chairs. To provide for continuity of the Group's work and ensure that the complete membership does not turn over at any one point, the terms of the members not serving as ex-officio will be staggered with half of the members being offered an initial 2-year term and half a 3-year term. If a Head of State or Minister who is a member of the Council ceases to hold office during his/her term, then a vacancy will be created to be filled with another government representative not necessarily from the same country.

Selection criteria:

- Council members shall be at the level of Head of State or Government. They could be the chairs of regional political entities.
- Representatives of the private sector and civil society will be at the head of organisation level with a high public profile and a track record of working on relevant issues.
- Priority will be given to ensuring gender and age balance in selection of both government and non-governmental council members.

Relationships:

The Council will engage with key relevant partners of the international system for pandemic preparedness and response including the World Health Organisation, the United Nations, the International Financial Institutions (including the regional development banks), civil society and private sector.

The UN Secretary-General, the Director-General of WHO, the Executive Director of IMF and the President of the World Bank Group will be strategic and key leaders for the Council to interact with.

Ways of working:

- The Council shall meet monthly during the current pandemic with the ability to call additional meetings on an ad hoc basis as required.
- When feasible, the Council will shift to a focus on ensuring continued work with less frequent meetings of the Council and regular sessions of surrogates as determined by the Council.
- In times without a crisis the work shall focus on preparedness and monitoring progress.
- Strive for inclusive multi-stakeholder engagement with Member States, UN agencies, international and intergovernmental organizations and regional entities, civil society, the private sector, researchers and other key stakeholders.

- An evidence-based approach drawing on data and analytical work done by WHO and other relevant international organisations. The Council shall benefit from the Universal Periodic Peer Review outcomes.
- The Council shall support the United Nations Secretary-General in convening a High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly every year to review global progress.
- The Council shall be supported by a lean independent secretariat located in Geneva with the ability to draw upon technical expertise from the WHO, the UN and the IFIs as necessary.