



150th SESSION of the WHO EXECUTIVE BOARD

(Geneva, 24–29 January 2022)

10:00AM – 5:00PM (CET)/ 2:30PM – 9:30PM (IST)

National Statement

Agenda: Pillar 2: One billion more people better protected from health emergencies

Item 15:Public health emergencies: preparedness and response

15.1 Strengthening WHO preparedness for and response to health emergencies

15.2 Standing Committee on Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness and Response

(Word Count: 403)

Thank you, Chair,

India welcomes the interim report of the Working Group on Strengthening WHO preparedness for and response to health emergencies that has been submitted before the Executive Board. We particularly welcome that, the WGPR has strongly highlighted the issue of inequity in the global pandemic response and the need for addressing it as a top priority.

India believes that various initiatives that emanated as initial responses to the COVID19 pandemic need to align and synergize with the recommendations of the WGPR. This would be true reflection of Member States' expectation from WHO during health emergencies.

Within its normative functions, **we complement WHO for taking initiatives** for reviewing existing IHR assessment tools with emphasis on strong subnational presence, the Universal Health and Preparedness Review

mechanism (UHPR), creating a global hub for pandemic and epidemic intelligence and a Bio Hub system.

Chair,

All such initiatives need to be carried forward through a consultative member States driven process, especially when some of these initiatives affect the sovereignty of Members and their rights under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing.

India strongly believes that the vaccine inequity has brought to the fore the inevitable need to discuss and negotiate an access and benefit sharing framework for sharing of human pathogens of pandemic potential including genetic sequence information. Given the prominence of equity in WGPR discussions, such a framework could be discussed by the WGPR under its ongoing work.

Chair,

India reiterates its position regarding the need to further strengthen the IHR through potential amendments with a goal of their universal application for the protection of all people of world from international spread of disease in an equitable manner. We would, therefore, co-sponsor the resolution titled Strengthening of the International Health Regulations (2005) for revising the Regulations through potential amendments presented by the delegation of United States.

India in-principle support the proposal of Austria forwarded by the DG for establishing a *Standing Committee on Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness and Response (SCPPR)*. India has been advocating to strengthen WHO governance and for increased and inclusive participation of member states in

decision making. However, India would highlight that this requires detailed member State consultation. **Therefore, it is important that such a committee is established in a step-wise consultative manner with a certain degree of clarity about its functions and terms of reference before its launch.**

Thank you.