

Newsletter of the INB Bureau (#1/2022)

1 December 2022

About us: The Bureau of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB)



From left to right: Mr Kazuho Taguchi (Japan), Vice-Chair; Dr Viroj Tangcharoensathien (Thailand), Vice-Chair; Mr. Roland Driece (the Netherlands), Co-Chair; Dr. Precious Matsoso (South Africa), Co-Chair; Ambassador Tovar da Silva Nunes (Brazil), Vice-Chair; Mr Ahmed Salama Soliman (Egypt), Vice-Chair, Second meeting of the INB, July 2022.

Foreword

We are delighted to launch the newsletter about the essential work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) to deliver a pandemic accord by mid-2024 with this first edition. The year 2020 marked a watershed in history with the COVID-19 pandemic. We have expressed our [vision](#) and commitment, as representatives of the Member States of the WHO and Members of the Bureau of the INB “to protect present and future generations from the devastating consequences of pandemics, on the basis of equity, human rights and solidarity with all people and countries, recognizing the sovereign rights of countries and respect for their national context, as well as the differences in capacities and levels of development among them”. This newsletter reflects our collective will to bring you onboard throughout this critical journey in a fully transparent manner, and to help you follow and engage in this unique process as part of our commitment to inclusivity.

How the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body works – The Bureau:

As you read about the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB), you will hear about the “Bureau”. Coordinating and driving high-level negotiations among WHO’s full membership of 194 Member States, organized in six WHO regions, is no easy task. To facilitate the work, six Officers, one from each of the six WHO regions, form the Bureau. These six Officers, including two co-chairs, work together to design and implement a proposed process for the negotiations amongst all 194 Member States.



The picture to the left shows the INB Bureau in action during the second meeting of the INB in July 2022.

In addition to the [official meetings of the INB](#), we set aside time at least once every two weeks to discuss progress, issues and next steps as a [Bureau](#) as we strive to meet Member States' expectations. We are supported by a small and committed team of the WHO Secretariat. Together, we are proud to guide the path of a long journey. Together we will stop in front of (and address) each of the challenges facing our global community before reaching our final destination, i.e. a pandemic accord.

Status of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body process:

Many of you are keen to know where we stand and what it will take to reach our final destination.

The **first step** of our work focused on **building the foundations** of our collective endeavour.

Following the historical decision from the Special Session of the World Health Assembly in December 2021, the INB accomplished the following between February and June 2022:



- **Whom to engage?** We identified the largest list of [relevant stakeholders](#) that any WHO-led process has engaged so far to demonstrate our commitment to inclusivity;

- **How to work?** We agreed on how we will work and how we will engage stakeholders in this process. We organized the first public hearings in April 2022, which collected 122 verbal submissions and 36'294 written submissions;

- **What to discuss?** Thanks to a survey and written submissions, we collected stakeholders'

feedback on the key substantive elements that should structure our work, i.e. principles, and objectives;

- **By when to deliver?** We agreed on our [timeline](#) to reach our final destination (i.e., by May 2024).

The **second steppingstone** was reached in July 2022, when we identified the provisions of the WHO Constitution under which the instrument could be adopted. **What does this mean?** We agreed that a new international instrument on pandemic prevention should be legally binding and would contain both legally binding and non-legally binding elements. It was an essential moment for all of us Member States to **agree on our ambition** as we embark on this challenging journey. Our hope is to help empower Member States to take early action, should a new tragedy such as the COVID-19 pandemic ever hit the world again.



The **next step** of the Bureau's effort has consisted of **organizing an inclusive process and listening to the voices** of all interested stakeholders and collecting your input towards a Conceptual Zero Draft, to be discussed at the third meeting of the INB in December 2022.

For this reason, we launched a **comprehensive process of consultations** at multiple levels, including some live webcasts:

- Regional consultations: each of the six Regions of the WHO held dedicated sessions during or on the sidelines of their Regional Committees ([Americas](#), [Africa](#), [Eastern Mediterranean](#), [Europe](#), [South East Asia](#), and [Western Pacific](#)).
- Written inputs from stakeholders: we invited written inputs from stakeholders to reflect our commitment to inclusivity.
- Public hearings: the WHO Secretariat organized a second round of [public hearings to inform of the work of the INB](#), which allowed interested individuals and organizations to share their views at this critical juncture (418 unique verbal contributions).
- Informal, focused consultations: to utilize the technical and policy expertise available globally, we organized four [informal focused consultations](#) with leading experts to inform our collective reflection on the topics of: legal matters, operationalizing and achieving equity, intellectual property (IP), production and transfer of technology and know-how, One Health, antimicrobial resistance, climate change and zoonoses.

What's next? We still have many hills to climb. It is a journey that will require all of us to stand together. We, as the Bureau of the INB, are grateful to count on committed Member States and resolute Members of the Bureau to reach success in our collective work. We will now pursue the most critical part of our work: gathering our collective energies and ideas to discuss a Conceptual Zero Draft at its third meeting in December 2022, collectively examining every challenge and every issue, and working together relentlessly to achieve our final goal. Our proposal is for Member States to start the negotiations on a zero draft at the fourth meeting of the INB in February 2023; the way forward will be discussed by the INB in December.

[Bureau engagement at stakeholders' meetings](#)

We continuously look out for opportunities to reach you. In this spirit, we were pleased that one of us, i.e., Co-Chair Precious Matsoso, was able to have a dialogue with the Pandemic Action Network, a group of over 250 interested organizations, in July 2022. We also engage regularly in twitter live conversations.

[Stakeholders' voices](#)

We were impressed by the level of commitment of numerous Ministers and high-level representatives, and we accept the challenge they have given us to incorporate their critical inputs.

Plan of upcoming events¹

Date	Meeting	Deliverables
5-7 December 2022	Third meeting of the INB	–Consideration of a conceptual zero draft of the WHO CA+ – Discussion of the way forward, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• development of the zero draft of the WHO CA+• establishment of drafting group modalities
30 January - 7 February 2023	Executive Board: 152nd session	
27 February - 3 March 2023	Fourth meeting of the INB and meetings of a drafting group	– Presentation of the zero draft of the WHO CA+; – Establishment of a drafting group, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• allocation of items to the drafting group.
3-6 April 2023	Fifth meeting of the INB and continuation of meetings of the drafting group	–Preparation of a progress report for the Seventy-sixth World Health Assembly; – Progress towards a consensus text of the WHO CA+
21-30 May 2023	Seventy-sixth World Health Assembly	Submission of progress report

How can stakeholders participate in the future?

We are reaching the beginning of a new major phase of our work, after extensive consultations with stakeholders, and we have been working to digest all the feedback received the hundreds of contributions received. Relevant stakeholders should watch out for invitations to participate in upcoming INB meetings through the Governing Bodies Department and the Health and Multilateral Partnership Department of WHO. The interested public may follow these meetings through live webcasts. Additionally, you may want to check regularly the following key resources:

- [WHO | Intergovernmental Negotiating Body](#)
- [Intergovernmental Negotiating Body \(INB\) \(who.int\)](#)

What's next?

We plan on issuing the next Newsletter in early 2023, and we look forward to sharing our progress with you.

¹ The revised schedule of upcoming INB meetings is pending agreement by the INB at its third meeting, on 5-7 December 2022.