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77th World Health Assembly adopts amendments to International Health Regulations 2005

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Amendments aim at improving countriesâ?? ability to prepare for and respond to Public Health Emergencies of International Concern and Pandemic Emergencies



In a landmark achievement in the global health security agenda, the 77th World Health Assembly agreed to the package of amendments to the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005) based on 300 proposals made by member countries after the Covid-19 pandemic.

The targeted amendments to the International Health Regulations (IHR) aim at improving countries' ability to prepare for and respond to Public Health Emergencies of International Concern (PHEIC) and Pandemic Emergencies (PE). They include provisions for facilitating equitable access to relevant health products during PHEIC and PE, as well as mobilising financial resources to support developing countries in building, strengthening, and maintaining the core capacities required under the IHR (2005).

The Working group on International Health Regulations (WGIHR) and Intergovernmental Negotiating Body on Pandemic treaty with country representations began the negotiation process in two separate groups almost two years ago and met a number of times including many resumed sessions on the issue. The processes witnessed a number of close calls with seeming deadlocks over positions taken by the various stakeholders.

In order to finalise the package of amendments to IHR, a proposal was put forward in the form of a White Paper by Apurva Chandra, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, as Chair of Committee A of the World Health Assembly on 28th May, 2024. It proposed to establish a single drafting group, to be co-chaired by one Bureau member from the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) and the Working Group on Amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) (WGIHR) respectively, to consider the matters related to some of the most critical agenda items, the proposed amendments to the IHR (2005), followed by consideration of procedural matters on way forward related to INB negotiations on the Pandemic treaty. The said proposal was approved by all member states by consensus.