

Provisional agenda: The public health implications of implementation of the Nagoya Protocol

Statement

Thank you chair for this opportunity to address the EB. This MMI statement is supported by PHM.

To effectively respond to public health emergencies, prompt sharing of resources such as access to treatment, transfer of technology and knowledge, is crucial.

Pathogen and genetic sequence sharing for public health with advanced laboratories and the pharmaceutical industry, such as in the case of SARS, Ebola, H5N1, has too often lacked fairness and equity. R&D results, technology and treatments were not shared with the country providing pathogens or related sequences. Instead, monopoly patent claims are made with respect to the material, sequence information as well products developed, with the diagnostics and treatments either unavailable or prohibitively priced.

In this context, the access and benefit sharing principles of the Convention of Biological Diversity and its Nagoya Protocol presents a huge opportunity for public health. The Protocol would ensure fairness and equity by requiring pathogen sharing and benefit sharing to be on an equal footing.

The PIP Framework is an example of concrete implementation of the access and benefit sharing principles benefiting global health. Experts have hailed this Framework as a “bold and innovative tool for pandemic influenza preparedness” stressing the continued relevance of the principle of equal footing for other pathogens.

Scaremongering about the Protocol and rushed solutions are unhelpful. For a start, we need to better understand pathogen sharing arrangements especially within WHO. Without fair and equitable benefit sharing, there cannot be a sustainable, rapid and effective response to public health emergencies. We urge MS to stress the fully support the Protocol and mandate the WHO secretariat to integrate its principles in WHO's work.