WHO

# BACKGROUND GUIDE

OAKRIDGE MODEL UNITED NATIONS '25

## WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION
(WHO)

### AGENDA

Strengthening International Health Regulations in Response to Dual-Use Biotechnology and Future Pathogen Threats

Prepared for Oakridge Model United Nations 2025

# Contents

# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

*"Debate and deliberation are how you stir the soul of a democracy"*
**- Jesse Jackson**

Greetings, Delegates. We are pleased to welcome you all as delegates at Oakridge MUN'25. I hope you're as excited as we are about participating in this conference. To the MUN veterans out there, we promise you a very enriching debate, and to the newcomers, we promise you a memorable first experience! A MUN inculcates in your oratory skills, cajoling negotiations, and in-depth research, and if we start making a list of the qualities, the entire background guide might talk just about it! With this said, a committee simulation is meaningful and successful only when the delegates are well-prepared.

We have spent hours researching and writing this Background Guide to aid your research preparation. The Background Guide serves as an introduction to your respective committee and an overview of the topics you will debate throughout the conference. Also, this guide is only a basic outline to direct you about the agenda; you are advised not to rely on this. What we desire from the delegates is not experience or how articulate they are. Instead, we want to see how she/he can respect differences of opinion and work around these while extending their stance to encompass more of the others without compromising their stand, reaching acceptable and practical solutions.

**Research Pattern Recommendation:**

- Read about your state (country)
- Read the relationship of your country with the agenda-centric countries
- Read about those countries, the trade, cultural, historical, and diplomatic relations between your country and them
- Read about the agenda
- Read about the previous UN actions, resolutions, and conventions

Unless necessary, the Executive Board will not intervene in the flow of debate. As a result, it is up to the delegates to keep the committee moving forward. We are sure the delegates can guide the committee on the correct path with proper investigation. If you have any questions concerning the agenda or the rules of procedure, please contact the Executive Board at any time before or during the conference. In addition, we have provided an addendum to this letter that discusses the kind of evidence involved in this

simulation.

We hope all participants will demonstrate the highest standards of decorum and conduct themselves appropriately throughout the confirmed course. Remember, your role is to act diplomatically, representing your country to the best of your abilities. This WHO simulation will provide valuable experience and help you become a more proficient professional. Please feel free to ask or provide responses; this engagement will be greatly appreciated. Model UN conferences are designed to be collaborative, not competitive, and we aim to uphold this spirit within our committee. Our purpose is not to solve the world's problems in three days but to educate ourselves about them. This will ensure that we grow into a generation of informed leaders with the skills and determination to improve our world.

**Warm regards,**
**Chairperson:** Syed Hudaifah - 9108486985 - syedhudaifah@gmail.com
**Vice-Chairperson:** Pratheek Konda - 7032855505 - kondapratheek@gmail.com

# 1 USAGE OF THE BACKGROUND GUIDE

Study Guides contradict popular belief and are not supposed to contain all the information on a particular topic. All the information given in this guide is from an unbiased perspective, and we have refrained from making judgments as much as possible if the United Nations had made none.

## 1.1 BASIC SUGGESTIONS BEFORE YOU START RESEARCHING

A few aspects that delegates should remember while preparing:

### 1.1.1 Procedure

The purpose of putting procedural rules in any committee is to ensure a more organised and efficient debate. The committee will follow the UNA-USA Rules of Procedure, a link for which has been provided in the last section of this Guide. Although the Executive Board shall be strict with the Rules of Procedure, the agenda discussion will be the main priority. So, delegates are advised not to restrict their statements due to hesitation regarding the procedure.

# 2 UNA-USA MUN: RULES OF PROCEDURE

## 2.1 I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

**Rule 1. Official and working languages:** English shall be all committees' official and working language during formal and informal debates.

**Rule 2. DECORUM** Delegates are to obey instructions given by UNA-USA MUN staff. Those who do not follow directions will be dismissed from the conference.

## 2.2 II. SECRETARIAT

**Rule 3. Statements by the Secretariat:** The Secretary-General or his representative may make oral and written statements to any committee concerning any issue.

**Rule 4. General Functions of the Secretariat:** The Chairperson shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting. They may propose adopting any procedural motions with no significant objection. The Chair, subject to these rules, shall have complete control of the proceedings at any meeting and shall moderate discussion, announce decisions, rule

on points or motions, and ensure and enforce the observance of these rules. The Chair may temporarily transfer his or her duties to another committee staff member. All procedural matters in committee are subject to the discretion of the Chair. The Chair may undertake any action that is not covered in the Rules of Procedure to facilitate the flow of debate at the conference.

## 2.3 III. AGENDA

**Rule 5. Agenda** The Secretary-General or his/her representative shall communicate the agenda to the delegates before the conference.

**Rule 6. Revision of the Agenda** Additional items of an important and urgent nature may be placed on the agenda during a regular session by the Secretary-General, who may add additional topics to the agenda at his/her discretion.

**Rule 7. Adoption of the Agenda** The committee's first order of business shall be the agenda's adoption. The only motion in order at this time will be in the form of "The nation of [country name] moves that [topic area x] be placed first on the agenda."

The motion requires a second and is debatable

A provisional speakers list shall be established with three people speaking for and three people speaking against the motion (speaking time for these remarks shall be one minute)

After the provisional speaker's list is exhausted, the committee shall move into an immediate vote: a simple majority is required for the motion to pass

A motion to proceed to the second topic area is in order only after the committee has adopted or rejected a resolution on the first topic area or the debate has been adjourned

In a crisis or emergency, the Secretary-General or Director-General may call upon a committee to discuss the current topic to address the more urgent matter. After a resolution has been discussed and voted upon, the committee will return to debate the tabled topic. If a resolution on the crisis topic fails, the committee may return to the discussion on the tabled topic area only at the Secretary-General's or Director-General's discretion.

## 2.4 IV. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

**Rule 8. Speakers List** The Chair shall open the speakers' list for each topic to be discussed at the request of a delegate. Any delegate wishing to be added to the speaker's

list shall indicate so when asked by the Chair or shall submit such a request in writing to the dais.

**Rule 9. Limitation of Speaking Time** The Chair may limit the time allotted to each speaker. However, delegates can make a motion to increase or decrease the speaking time, which will be voted upon by the committee or council. When a delegate exceeds his or her allotted time, the Chair may call the speaker to order without delay.

**Rule 10. Speeches** No delegate may address the body without the previously obtained permission of the Chair. The Chair may call a speaker to order if his/her remarks are irrelevant to the subject under discussion. The Chair shall enforce the time limit as described by Rule 9.

**Rule 11. Yielding Time** The delegate, who the Chair has recognized to address the body on a substantive issue, may yield any time following their remarks after their speech. Yields may be made in three ways: to another delegate, to points of information (questions), or the Chair.

- **Yield to another delegate:** His/her remaining time shall be given to another delegate.
- **Yield to questions:** The Chair shall select delegates to ask one question per speech. The Chair has the right to call order to any delegate whose question is, in the opinion of the Chair, not designed to elicit information. Answers to questions are limited to the time remaining in a delegate's speech.
- **Yield to the Chair:** Such a yield should be made if the delegate does not wish his/her speech to be subject to comments. The Chair shall then move on to the next speaker. Once a delegate yields his/her time, the second delegate (who has been yielded to) may not produce any remaining time.

**Rule 12. Right Of Reply** The Chair may recognise the Right of Reply only in cases of grave personal insult. Rights of Reply Must be submitted in writing to the Chair and may only be granted after a speech is completed. The Chair shall inform the Secretary-General of the circumstances surrounding the Right of Reply. No ruling on this matter is subject to appeal.

**Rule 13. Appeal to the Chair's Decision** An appeal is made when a delegate feels the Chair has made an incorrect ruling. The delegate formally challenges the Chair in writing by sending a note to the dais, moving to appeal the Chair's decision. The appeal will be taken to the Deputy-Secretary General, who will decide whether the appeal will be considered. Once the motion is acknowledged, the Deputy Secretary General will hear from both the delegate and the Chair before making a decision.

## 2.5 V. POINTS

**Rule 14. Point Of Personal Privilege** During the discussion of any matter, a delegate may raise a Point of Personal Privilege, and the Chair shall immediately address the point. A Point of Personal Privilege must refer to the committee members' personal comfort, safety, and/or well-being. The Chair may refuse to recognize a Point of Personal Privilege if the delegate has not shown proper restraint and decorum or if the point is dilatory.

**Rule 15. Point Of Order** During the discussion of any matter, a delegate may raise a Point of Order, and the Chair shall immediately consider the request. A Point of Order must relate to the observance of the committee's rules or the way the Chair is exercising his or her power. A delegate raising a Point of Order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion. The Chair may refuse to recognize a Point of Order if the delegate has not shown proper restraint and decorum governing such a right or if the point is dilatory.

**Rule 16. Point Of Information (question to other delegates)** After a delegate gives a speech, and if the delegate yields their time to Points of Information, delegates from the floor can raise one Point of Information (a question). The speaker will be allotted the remainder of his or her speaking time to address Points of Information. Points of Information are directed to the speaker, allowing other delegations to ask questions about speeches and resolutions.

**Rule 17. Point Of Inquiry** If there is no discussion on the floor, a delegate may raise a Point of Inquiry to request clarification of the present procedural status of a meeting. A Point of Inquiry may never interrupt a speaker.

## 2.6 VI. MOTIONS

**Rule 18. Suspend Debate (Motion to Caucus)** Upon the recommendation of the Chair or any delegate, the committee may consider a motion to Suspend Debate for a moderated or unmoderated caucus. This motion requires a majority vote.

- **Moderated Caucus:** The recommendation for a moderated caucus must include a time limit for delegate remarks and a time limit for the entire caucus (e.g., "The nation of [country name] moves for a five-minute moderated caucus with a 30-second speaking time."). During a moderated caucus, the chair shall recognize delegates for remarks without using a speakers list, and yields shall be out of order.
- **Un-moderated Caucus:** The recommendation for an unmoderated caucus requires a time limit to be made (e.g., "The nation of [country name] moves for a ten-minute unmoderated caucus."). Unmoderated caucuses allow delegates to have informal discussions.

**Rule 19. Motion to Table Debate** During discussing any matter, the committee may consider a motion to table debate on the item under discussion at the Chair's recommendation or any delegate's recommendation. If the motion is seconded, two representatives may speak in favor of and two against the motion. Then, the motion shall immediately be put to a vote. A two-thirds majority is required for passage. If a motion to table debate is passed, the topic is considered tabled, and no further actions or votes will be taken. A topic may be reintroduced to the committee so that debate can resume through the same process. The motion to resume the discussion on a tabled topic shall also require a two-thirds majority for passage.

**Rule 20. Closure of Debate** A delegate may at any time move for the closure of the debate on the item under discussion, after which the debate will end, and all draft resolutions and amendments will be put to an immediate vote. Permission to speak on the closure of the discussion shall be accorded only to two speakers opposing the closure, after which the motion shall be immediately put to a vote. This motion requires a two-thirds majority decision. Upon passage of this motion, the Chair shall declare the closure of debate and immediately move into voting procedure on the substantive proposals introduced and pending before the committee. The committee shall close the discussion and move into the voting procedure when the speaker's list has been exhausted.

**Rule 21. Adjournment of the Meeting** During the discussion of any matter, a delegate may move for the adjournment of the meeting. Such a motion shall not be debated but immediately put to a vote. After adjournment, the committee shall reconvene at its next regularly scheduled meeting time; adjournment of the final meeting shall adjourn the session.

**Rule 22. Order Of Procedural Motions**
The motions below shall have precedence in the following order over all other proposals or motions before the committee:

a. Point of Personal Privilege

b. Point of Order

c. Point of Inquiry

d. Point of Information

e. Introduction of a Draft Resolution

f. Motion to Suspend Debate

g. Motion to Table Debate

h. Motion for Closure of Debate

i. Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

## 2.7 VII. RESOLUTIONS

**Rule 23. Submission Of Working Papers, Draft Resolutions, and Amendments** Working papers, draft resolutions, and amendments shall be submitted to the Director typed and with the proper number of signatures. (See Resolutions Submission Process.) The Chair may permit discussion and consideration of proposals and amendments once approved, even if the documents have not been circulated through the committee.

**Rule 24. Introducing Draft Resolutions** Once the Director has approved a draft resolution and has been copied and distributed, a delegate may raise a motion to introduce the draft resolution, which is automatically approved and does not require a vote. The content of the introduction shall be limited to summarizing the operative clauses of the draft resolution. Such an introduction shall be considered procedural. Hence, yields and comments are out of order. Additional questions and comments regarding the resolution are encouraged to be raised through the speakers list and yields.

**Rule 25. Amendments** Both friendly and unfriendly amendments require the approval of the Chair. An amendment is considered friendly if all of the sponsors of the initial draft resolution are signatories of the amendment. Such an amendment is adopted automatically. Unfriendly amendments are a decision of the Committee. An unfriendly amendment must have the approval of the Director and the signatures by 20% of the committee. Amendments to amendments are out of order.

## 2.8 VIII. VOTING

**Rule 26. Methods Of Decision** All procedural decisions, except for the closure and adjournment of debate, shall be made by a majority of the delegations present. Delegations physically present in the committee may not abstain on procedural motions. Decisions on draft resolutions and amendments shall require a simple majority in favor. However, the passage of all resolutions and amendments in the Security Council requires nine affirmative votes and an affirmative vote or an abstention on the part of all permanent members (People's Republic of China, France, Russian Federation, United States of America and United Kingdom).

**Rule 27. Voting Rights** Each present delegation shall have one vote. Observing nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) cannot vote on substantive matters. Each vote may be a Yes, no, or Abstain. On procedural motions, members may not abstain. Members "present and voting" shall be defined as members casting an affirmative or negative vote (no abstentions) on all substantive votes.

**Rule 28. Conduct** While in Voting Procedure, After the Chair has announced the beginning of voting, no representative may enter or leave the room, nor shall any representative interrupt the voting except on the point of Personal Privilege, Point of Inquiry, or a Point of Order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting. Communication between delegates is strictly forbidden. A member of the staff shall secure the doors during the voting procedure.

**Rule 29. Method Of Voting** Delegations may vote in favor of or against a proposal or abstain. The committee shall usually vote by show of placards, but any delegate may request a roll call vote on substantive matters. The roll call vote shall be taken alphabetically based on the English names of the countries present. During a roll call vote, delegations may answer with an affirmative vote, a negative vote, an abstention (when appropriate), or a pass. Delegations passing in the first round of voting will be called upon alphabetically in a second round, when they may only answer with an affirmative or negative vote. Delegations that appear to be voting out of policy while casting an affirmative or negative vote may reserve the right to explain their vote by Voting with Rights. Delegations must announce that they are Voting with Rights at the time they cast their vote. The Chair may permit delegations to vote with Rights to explain their votes after voting but before the decision has been announced.

**Rule 30. Order Of Draft Resolutions** If two or more draft resolutions relate to the same question, the committee shall vote on the resolutions in the order they have been submitted.

**Rule 31. Voting On Unfriendly Amendments** During the voting procedure on a substantive proposal, unfriendly amendments to a resolution shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments are proposed to a resolution concurrently, the committee shall

first vote on the amendment that creates the greatest change to the draft resolution, as deemed by the Chair, and then the amendment that creates the second greatest change to the resolution. This process continues until all amendments are voted upon. Where, however, the adoption of the amendment necessarily implies the rejection of another amendment (as decided by the Chair), the latter amendment shall not be put to a vote. If one or more amendments are adopted, the amended proposal shall be voted upon. Amendment voting is a substantive procedure, and adoption requires the simple majority consent of the present delegations.

**Rule 32. Passage Of Resolutions** The resolution shall be rejected if a vote does not result in a simple majority* in favor. A simple majority requires fifty percent of the members present during the last roll call, plus one. Example: 99 members present require 49.5 (50%) + 1= 50.5=51 affirmative votes. Exceptions: The United Nations Security Council requires nine affirmative votes to pass resolutions and amendments. In addition to the nine affirmative votes, an affirmative vote or an abstention on the part of all permanent members (People's Republic of China, France, Russian Federation, United States of America, and United Kingdom) is required to pass all resolutions and amendments.

## 2.9 IX. SUSPENSION OF THE RULES

**Rule 33. Suspension Of the Rules** These rules may only be suspended following a majority vote. Any motion to suspend the rules is subject to the Chair's discretion.

**Foreign Policy:** Following the foreign policy of one's country is the most important aspect of a Model UN Conference. This is what essentially differentiates a Model UN from other debating formats. To violate one's foreign policy without adequate reason is one of the worst mistakes a delegate can make.

**Role of the Executive Board:** The Executive Board is appointed to facilitate debate. The committee shall decide the direction and flow of the discussion. The delegates are the ones who constitute the committee and, hence, must be uninhibited while presenting their opinions/stances on any issue. However, the Executive Board may put forward questions and/or ask for clarifications at all points of time to debate further and test participants. As a challenging yet highly rewarding committee, involvement in this simulation offers insight into international relations and political dynamics. Much work will be required, but as previous participants in similar simulations, we promise you an exciting experience.

# 3 MUN TERMS YOU'LL HEAR

**Adjourn:** This is basically when the committee wraps up a session, either for a short break or for good. It's how you say, "Okay, we're done here for now."

**Agenda:** This is the list of topics your committee will be talking about. Think of it as your meeting's to-do list.

**Amendment:** Got an idea to tweak a resolution? That's an amendment! You can suggest changes, additions, or even things to remove.

**Caucus:** This is basically a fancy word for a break from formal debate to chat and strategize.

**Moderated Caucus:** It's a structured chat where the Chair gives everyone a super short time to speak on a specific mini-topic. Good for quick ideas.

**Unmoderated Caucus:** This is free-for-all chat time! Get up, move around, and talk directly with other delegates to build alliances and write stuff.

**Chair/Chairperson:** This is the person running the show, making sure everyone follows the rules and debate flows smoothly.

**Closure of Debate:** This motion means, "Enough talk! Let's vote!" It's how you move from discussing to deciding.

**Committee:** This is your specific group at the MUN conference, like the UN General Assembly or Security Council.

**Delegate:** That's you! You're representing a country or organization in your committee.

**Draft Resolution:** This is your group's proposed solution to the problem. It's like a rough draft of a formal proposal.

**Executive Board (EB):** These are the folks overseeing your committee – the Chair, Vice-Chair, etc. They're there to help keep things on track.

**Motion:** This is how you formally ask the committee to do something, like start a caucus or vote.

**Point of Information:** If a delegate just spoke and allowed questions, this is your chance to ask them something about what they said.

**Point of Order:** Use this if you think someone broke a rule. The Chair will address it right away.

**Point of Personal Privilege:** This is for when something personal is bothering you, like if you can't hear or the room is too hot.

**Procedural Vote:** These are votes about how the meeting runs, not about the actual issues. You usually can't skip these votes.

**Resolution:** Once a draft resolution gets enough votes, it becomes a full-fledged resolution – the committee's official stance.

**Right of Reply:** If someone really insults you or your country, this is your chance to briefly respond.

**Roll Call Vote:** This is when they call out each country's name, and you publicly say your vote.

**Second:** When someone makes a motion, another delegate needs to "second" it to show support before it can be discussed or voted on.

**Secretariat:** This is the entire team that organizes the whole MUN conference.

**Simple Majority:** This just means more than half the votes (50% + 1) are needed for something to pass.

**Speakers List:** This is the official list of who wants to speak on the topic, and you speak in that order.

**Substantive Vote:** These are the big votes on the actual resolutions and amendments – the core decisions. You can say yes, no, or abstain.

**Table Debate:** This means you want to put the current topic on hold indefinitely, usually because something more important came up.

**Yield:** This is what you do with any leftover speaking time. You can give it to another delegate, open it up for questions, or give it back to the Chair.

# 4 WHAT TO EXPECT AS A MUN FRESHER: A FRIENDLY GUIDE

JUMPING into your first Model UN conference is a pretty big deal! It's super exciting, but it's totally normal to feel a bit overwhelmed too. Here's what you can realistically expect to help you rock it:

## 4.1 Nerves? Totally Normal!

Seriously, everyone gets a little jittery, even the pros. Just embrace it as part of the adventure. You're learning, and that's awesome!

## 4.2 Getting into the Swing of Things

The first few hours might feel like a whirlwind of new terms and procedures. Don't sweat it if you're not instantly a pro.

- **Watch and Learn:** Pay close attention to the Chair and the more experienced delegates. You'll pick up on the rhythm quickly.
- **Your Rules Handbook is Your Friend:** Keep your rules guide handy. Seeing how things work in person will make it all click.
- **Be Patient:** It takes a little time to settle in. By the end of day one, you'll feel way more comfortable.

## 4.3 Finding Your Voice

**No Rush to Speak First:** You absolutely don't have to be the first one to speak up. Listen to what others are saying, gather your thoughts, and when you're ready, jump in!

- **Start Small:** Maybe just ask a quick question during a moderated caucus or a "point of information" after someone speaks.
- **Keep It Clear:** When you do speak, focus on being clear and getting straight to the point. Short and sweet is better than long and rambling.

## 4.4 Research is Your Superpower

**Go Beyond the Basics:** While the Background Guide gives you a great start, dive deeper! Learn your country's stance on the issues, its history, and its national interests.
**Know Your Stuff:** The more you know about your country's position, the more confident you'll be in debate, forming alliances, and writing resolutions.
**Think Ahead:** Good research helps you guess what other countries might argue and lets you prepare your responses.

## 4.5 It's All About Teamwork (Mostly)

- **Collaborate, Don't Just Compete:** MUN is about working together to solve global problems, not just winning every argument. Focus on finding common ground and building friendships.
- **Strategic Alliances:** Look for countries that share your interests and work with them to achieve common goals.
- **Jot It Down:** Keep notes! Write down key points from others, potential allies, and how positions are shifting. This will be a huge help when you're preparing to speak or drafting resolutions.

## 4.6 Additional Tips

**Don't Be Afraid to Ask!** If you're confused about a rule or anything else, just send a note to the Chair (a "Point of Inquiry" if debate isn't happening). The folks running the committee are there to help you.

**Drafting Resolutions is a Group Effort:** You'll probably team up with others to write resolutions. This means lots of teamwork, compromising, and making sure the language is just right.

**Make New Friends:** MUN conferences are awesome for meeting people who are into similar stuff – international relations, debate, and diplomacy.

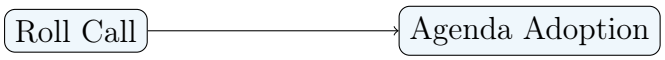
**It's All About Learning:** Even if you don't speak a lot or your resolution doesn't pass, you'll still learn so much. You'll boost your public speaking, research, and negotiation skills, and get a better grasp of world issues. Every conference is a growth experience.

**Most Importantly, Have Fun!** While it's a serious academic thing, don't forget to enjoy yourself! The friendly competition and the intellectual challenge are what make MUN so rewarding.

# 5 EXPECTED DEBATE FLOW IF IT'S ALL GOOD

Stepping into your first Model UN debate can feel a bit like learning a new dance – lots of steps and specific timings! But don't worry, once you get the hang of it, it's a dynamic and engaging process. Here's a simplified breakdown of how a typical committee session usually flows:

## 5.1 i. Setting the Stage: Roll Call and Agenda Adoption




**Roll Call:** The very first thing the Chair will do is take attendance. When your country's name is called, you'll say "Present" or "Present and Voting." "Present and Voting" means you commit to voting on all substantive matters and cannot abstain. For beginners, "Present" is a perfectly fine choice.

**Adopting the Agenda:** Your committee likely has more than one topic to discuss. You'll formally decide which topic to tackle first. A delegate will "move to place [Topic Area X] first on the agenda." This motion will be seconded, and there might be a short debate before a vote.

## 5.2 ii. Opening the Discussion: Speakers List

**Opening the Speakers List:** Once the agenda is adopted, the Chair will open the "Speakers List." This is where you sign up to give your initial, formal speech on the topic at hand.

**Giving Your First Speech:** When it's your turn, you'll go to the front (or stand if allowed) and present your country's opening statement. This is where you briefly outline your country's position on the issue, why it's important to your nation, and perhaps some initial thoughts on solutions. Remember to yield your time at the end (usually to questions or to the Chair).

## 5.3 iii. Deep Diving: Caucuses and Informal Debates

After a few delegates have spoken on the Speakers List, the debate often moves into more informal phases to allow for detailed discussion and negotiation:

**Moderated Caucuses:** A delegate will "move for a moderated caucus" on a specific sub-topic (e.g., "The nation of [country name] moves for a five-minute moderated caucus with a 30-second speaking time on the economic impacts of climate change"). The Chair will call on delegates who raise their placards to speak briefly on this specific mini-topic. This is great for brainstorming and hearing quick reactions.
**Unmoderated Caucuses:** This is where the real behind-the-scenes work happens! A delegate will "move for an unmoderated caucus" for a set time (e.g., "The nation of [country name] moves for a ten-minute unmoderated caucus"). During this time, you'll get up, walk around, and directly talk to other delegates. This is crucial for forming alliances, sharing ideas, and starting to draft working papers and resolutions.
**Returning to Speakers List:** After caucuses, the committee will typically return to the Speakers List to continue formal debate and hear from more delegates. This cycle of Speakers List and Caucuses will repeat throughout the conference.

## 5.4 iv. Crafting Solutions: Working Papers and Draft Resolutions

**Working Papers:** As you collaborate in unmoderated caucuses, you'll start writing down your shared ideas and proposed solutions. These initial documents are called "working papers." They aren't formal yet but help structure your discussions.

**Draft Resolutions:** Once a working paper is refined and has enough support (signatures from other delegates), it can be submitted to the Executive Board as a "draft resolution." This is the formal document outlining the proposed solutions.

**Introducing Draft Resolutions:** Once approved by the EB, a delegate will "move to introduce" their draft resolution. The primary sponsor will briefly read out the operative clauses (the action-oriented parts) to the committee.

## 5.5 v. Refining and Voting: Amendments and Final Votes

**Amendments:** Other delegates might want to suggest changes to a draft resolution. These are called "amendments." There are "friendly amendments" (agreed upon by the original sponsors, adopted automatically) and "unfriendly amendments" (require a vote by the committee).

**Closure of Debate:** When the committee feels they've discussed enough and are ready to make a decision, a delegate can "move for closure of debate." If this motion passes (usually by a two-thirds majority), all discussion immediately stops, and the committee moves into voting.

**Voting Procedure:**

1. First, the committee votes on any unfriendly amendments.
2. Then, the main draft resolutions are voted on.
3. Votes are typically taken by a show of placards, but sometimes a "roll call vote" (where each country's name is called individually) is requested for substantive matters.

## 5.6 vi. Wrapping Up: Adjournment

**Adjournment of the Meeting:** At the end of each session, a delegate will "move to adjourn the meeting." This motion is voted on and, if passed, formally ends the session. The committee will reconvene at its next scheduled time.

**Adjournment of the Session:** At the very end of the entire conference, this motion formally concludes all committee proceedings.

# 6 NATURE AND PROOF OF EVIDENCE

## 6.1 1. News Sources

### 6.1.1 a. REUTERS

Any Reuters article which clearly makes mention of the fact or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by a delegate in the council. (http://www.reuters.com/)

### 6.1.2 b. State-operated News Agencies

These reports can be used in support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any Country as such but in that situation, they can be denied by any other country in the council. Some examples are:

- RIA Novosti (Russia) http://en.rian.ru/
- IRNA (Iran) http://www.irna.ir/ENIndex.htm
- BBC (United Kingdom) http://www.bbc.co.uk/

## 6.2 2. Government Reports

These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country. However, a nuance is that a report that is being denied by a certain country can still be accepted by the Executive Board as credible information. Examples are:

- Government Websites like the State Department of the United States of America http://www.state.gov/index.htm or the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation http://www.eng.mil.ru/en/index.htm
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of various nations like India (http://www.mea.gov.in/), People's Republic of China (http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/), France (http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/), Russian Federation (http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/main_eng).
- Permanent Representatives to the United Nations: Reports http://www.un.org/en/members/ (Click on any country to get the website of the Office of its Permanent Representative).

- Multilateral Organizations like NATO (http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/index.htm), ASEAN (http://www.aseansec.org), OPEC (http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/), etc.
- Please note that Xinhua (a Government news agency from China) will not be accepted as a credible source.

## 6.3 3. UN Reports

All UN Reports are considered credible information or evidence for the Executive Board of the Security Council.

- UN Bodies: Like the UNSC (http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/), GA (http://www.un.org/en/ga/), HRC (http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/HRCIndex.aspx) etc.
- UN Affiliated bodies like the International Atomic Energy Agency (http://www.iaea.org/), World Bank (http://www.worldbank.org/), International Monetary Fund (http://www.imf.org/external/index.htm), International Committee of the Red Cross (http://www.icrc.org/eng/index.jsp), etc.
- Treaty Based Bodies like the Antarctic Treaty System (http://www.ats.aq/e/ats.htm), the International Criminal Court (http://www.icc-cpi.int/Menus/ICC)

Please find the below attached hierarchy of sources that would be considered for Points of Order and Points of Information:
**Tier 1:** Includes any publication, statement, resolution, or document released by any of the Nations' official organs or committees; any publication, statement, or document released by a UN member state (country) in its own capacity. The evidence falling in this tier is considered most reliable during the simulation.
**Tier 2:** Includes: any news article published by any official media source that is owned and controlled by a UN member state. E.g.: Xinhua News (China), Prasar Bharti (India), BBC (United Kingdom) etcetera. The evidence falling in this tier is considered sufficiently reliable incase no other evidence from any Tier 1 source is available on that particular fact, event, or situation.
**Tier 3:** Includes: any publication from news sources of international repute such as Reuters, The New York Times, Agence-France Presse, etc. The evidence falling under this tier is considered the least reliable for the purposes of this simulation. Yet, if no better source is available in a certain scenario, it may be considered.

# 7 MANDATE OF THE WHO

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the directing and coordinating authority for international health within the United Nations system. Established on 7 April 1948, its core mandate includes promoting health, keeping the world safe, and serving the vulnerable. The WHO sets global health standards, provides technical assistance to countries, monitors health trends, and leads responses to public health emergencies.

**Objective:** The primary objective of this committee is to address the growing risk posed by dual-use biotechnology—scientific research and technologies that can be repurposed for harmful applications—and to discuss how the International Health Regulations (IHR) can be revised or strengthened to better respond to future pathogen threats, whether naturally emerging or engineered. Delegates are expected to examine international health frameworks, propose new surveillance and regulatory mechanisms, and create equitable solutions for global cooperation in the face of rapidly evolving biotechnological risks.

## 7.1 Structure and Membership

The WHO is governed by:

- **World Health Assembly (WHA):** Composed of 194 Member States, it is the decision-making body.
- **Executive Board:** 34 technically qualified members elected for three-year terms, implementing WHA decisions.
- **Secretariat:** Headed by the Director-General and composed of expert staff and country offices.

All UN-recognized nations participate in WHO activities, with voting rights and responsibilities under international frameworks like the IHR.

## 7.2 Key Mechanisms of WHO

- **International Health Regulations (2005):** A legally binding instrument aimed at preventing the international spread of diseases while avoiding unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade.
- **Emergency Committees & PHEIC Declarations:** Public Health Emergency of International Concern declarations coordinate global responses.

- **Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN):** Rapid deployment of resources and expertise.
- **Scientific Advisory Groups (e.g., SAGO):** Address emerging pathogen origins and biosecurity risks.
- **Global Surveillance and Data Sharing Systems (e.g., GISAID):** Track mutations, pathogens, and outbreaks globally.

## 7.3 Achievements of WHO

- Eradication of smallpox and near-eradication of polio.
- Global coordination during COVID-19, SARS, MERS, Ebola, Zika.
- Launch of the COVAX facility for equitable vaccine distribution.
- Development of frameworks for pandemic preparedness, universal health coverage, and health systems strengthening.
- Establishment of norms, such as the IHR, and technical guidance to all countries.

## 7.4 Challenges and Criticism

**Limited enforcement power:** WHO can recommend but not compel states to act.
**Underfunding and political influence:** Budget constraints and donor-dependency affect independence.
**Delayed or uneven pandemic responses:** Criticism during COVID-19 for delay in early warning, inconsistency in travel recommendations, and political sensitivities.
**Inequities in global healthcare access:** Disproportionate burden on low-income countries during crises.
**Inadequate biosecurity governance:** WHO lacks strong mechanisms to monitor or control dual-use biotechnology globally.

## 7.5 Relevance of WHO to the Agenda

As biotechnology advances, the risk of engineered pathogens, biohacking, or laboratory accidents increases. Dual-use research, such as gain-of-function studies or synthetic virus construction, poses a global health threat that transcends borders. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed critical gaps in early detection, transparency, response coordination, and

biosafety regulations. Many experts now agree that IHR reforms must integrate biosecurity protocols, global surveillance for lab research, and stronger reporting obligations.

The WHO is uniquely positioned to lead this transformation through:

- Updating the IHR to explicitly address dual-use risks
- Guiding ethical biotech research with international oversight
- Enhancing global coordination and capacity-building in LMICs
- Integrating biosecurity with pandemic prevention and preparedness

The committee now has the urgent responsibility of designing policies that anticipate future threats both natural and synthetic and ensure that technological innovation does not outpace global safeguards.

# 8 UNDERSTANDING THE AGENDA: CORE COMPONENTS AND DEFINITIONS

## 8.1 Dual-Use Biotechnology: A Double-Edged Scientific Frontier

DUAL-USE biotechnology refers to biological research, techniques, and technologies that can be applied for both beneficial and harmful purposes. This concept encompasses research and innovations that, while designed for legitimate scientific, medical, or agricultural purposes, could potentially be misused to cause harm to humans, animals, plants, or the environment. The dual-use nature of biotechnology creates inherent challenges for regulation and oversight, as the same research that leads to life-saving vaccines or treatments could theoretically be manipulated to create biological weapons or enhance pathogen virulence.

The scope of dual-use biotechnology has expanded dramatically with advances in synthetic biology, gene editing technologies like CRISPR-Cas9, and artificial intelligence-driven biological research. These technologies enable scientists to modify organisms at the genetic level, synthesize novel biological agents, and potentially recreate dangerous pathogens from publicly available genetic sequences. The Global guidance framework for the responsible use of the life sciences: mitigating biorisks and governing dual-use research aims to provide values and principles, tools and mechanisms to support Member States and key stakeholders to mitigate and prevent biorisks and govern dual-use research.

Research of particular concern includes studies that could enhance pathogen virulence or drug resistance, evade detection by diagnostic tools, disrupt host immunity or vaccine efficacy, or confer the ability to circumvent therapeutic countermeasures. The challenge lies in maintaining the benefits of legitimate research while preventing the misuse of knowledge and technology for malicious purposes. This balance is further complicated by the global nature of scientific collaboration and the rapid pace of technological advancement.

## 8.2 International Health Regulations: The Legal Framework for Global Health Security

The International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR) provide an overarching legal framework that defines countries' rights and obligations in handling public health events and emergencies that have the potential to cross borders. The IHR represents the evolution of international health law from earlier regulations focused primarily on cholera, plague, and yellow fever to a comprehensive framework addressing all public health emergencies of

international concern.

The 2005 IHR established a paradigm shift from a disease-specific approach to an all-hazards framework, requiring countries to develop core capacities for surveillance, reporting, and response to public health threats regardless of their origin or source. IHR require that all countries detect, assess, report, and respond to public health events. The regulations establish the legal obligation for countries to report events that may constitute a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) to WHO within 24 hours of assessment.

Central to the IHR framework is the concept of core capacities that all countries must develop and maintain. These include surveillance systems capable of detecting and investigating public health events, laboratory services for confirmation and characterization of pathogens, and response capabilities including rapid response teams and emergency operations centers. The regulations also establish WHO's authority to declare a PHEIC and issue temporary recommendations to guide international response efforts.

## 8.3 Future Pathogen Threats: Anticipating Unknown Risks

Future pathogen threats encompass both naturally emerging infectious diseases and those that might arise through human activities, including laboratory accidents or deliberate misuse of biotechnology. The concept recognizes that pathogenic threats are not static but evolve continuously through natural selection, human-driven environmental changes, and technological advancement. Climate change, urbanization, global travel and trade, and ecosystem disruption create new opportunities for pathogen emergence and spread.

With the support of the Scientific Advisory Group for the Origins of Novel Pathogens (SAGO), the World Health Organization (WHO) has published a global framework to help Member States comprehensively investigate the origins of new and re-emerging pathogens. This framework acknowledges that understanding pathogen origins is crucial for preventing future outbreaks and developing appropriate countermeasures.

The challenge of future pathogen threats is compounded by the potential for biotechnology to create novel risks. Laboratory research involving dangerous pathogens, while essential for developing countermeasures, inherently carries risks of accidental release or intentional misuse. The synthesis of pathogens from genetic sequences, the enhancement of pathogen characteristics through gain-of-function research, and the development of biological agents that could evade existing medical countermeasures represent emerging categories of risk that traditional health security frameworks were not designed to address.

# 9 PRE-EXISTING FRAMEWORKS: HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND EVOLUTION

## 9.1 The Legacy of International Health Cooperation

INTERNATIONAL cooperation in health regulation traces its origins to the mid-19th century when European powers began negotiating International Sanitary Conventions to manage cholera epidemics spreading along trade routes. The first International Sanitary Conference, held in Paris in 1851, marked the beginning of multilateral efforts to balance trade interests with public health protection. These early agreements established the principle that international health measures should be the minimum necessary to prevent disease spread while avoiding unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade.

The establishment of the Office International d'Hygiène Publique in 1907 created the first permanent international health organization, later succeeded by the Health Organization of the League of Nations. These institutions developed the foundational concepts of international health surveillance, standardized disease reporting, and coordinated response measures that would later be incorporated into WHO's mandate.

The experience of the 1918 influenza pandemic revealed the limitations of existing international health cooperation mechanisms and highlighted the need for more robust global health governance. The pandemic's rapid spread and devastating impact demonstrated that infectious diseases could not be contained through national measures alone and required coordinated international action. However, the absence of effective international coordination mechanisms and the focus on post-war reconstruction limited the global response capacity.

## 9.2 Early WHO Initiatives and the Birth of International Health Regulations

The WHO Constitution, adopted in 1946, represented a revolutionary expansion of international health cooperation beyond the narrow focus on preventing disease spread through international commerce. The constitution's broad definition of health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" established WHO's mandate to address health in its fullest sense.

The first International Health Regulations, adopted in 1951 and initially known as the International Sanitary Regulations, maintained the traditional focus on six quarantinable diseases: cholera, plague, yellow fever, smallpox, relapsing fever, and typhus. These regulations required countries to notify WHO of cases and implement specified control measures, but their scope remained limited to diseases with established international spread patterns.

The successful global smallpox eradication campaign, completed in 1980, demonstrated the potential for coordinated international health action and provided valuable lessons for future pandemic preparedness efforts. The campaign's success relied on global surveillance networks, standardized case definitions, coordinated vaccination strategies, and sustained political commitment, elements that would become central to modern health security frameworks.

## 9.3 Evolution Toward Comprehensive Health Security

The emergence of HIV/AIDS in the 1980s challenged traditional approaches to international health regulation and highlighted the limitations of disease-specific control measures. HIV/AIDS spread rapidly through multiple transmission routes, affected diverse populations, and required long-term care and treatment rather than short-term epidemic control measures. The pandemic demonstrated that effective response required broad-based health system strengthening, community engagement, and sustained international cooperation beyond traditional quarantine and isolation measures.

The 1995 revision of the International Health Regulations reflected growing recognition that the existing framework was inadequate for addressing emerging health threats. However, the revision remained focused on the same six diseases and failed to address the broader health security challenges that had become apparent through experience with HIV/AIDS and other emerging diseases.

The anthrax attacks in the United States in 2001 introduced the concept of biological terrorism into mainstream health security discourse and highlighted the potential for non-state actors to use biological agents as weapons. These events demonstrated that health security threats could arise from intentional acts as well as natural disease emergence, requiring health systems to prepare for a broader range of scenarios including those involving unusual pathogens or delivery methods.

# 10 EXISTING FRAMEWORKS: CURRENT REGULATORY ARCHITECTURE

## 10.1 The International Health Regulations (2005): Structure and Implementation

The 2005 revision of the International Health Regulations represented a fundamental transformation of international health law, moving from a disease-specific approach to an all-hazards framework capable of addressing any public health emergency of international concern. The revised regulations established a comprehensive system of obligations for countries and powers for WHO that extends far beyond the traditional scope of international health cooperation.

The IHR (2005) established eight core capacities that all countries must develop and maintain: national legislation and financing; coordination and National Focal Point communications; surveillance; response; preparedness; risk communication; human resources; and laboratory services. These core capacities represent the minimum essential functions required for effective detection, assessment, reporting, and response to public health threats. Countries were given until 2012 to develop these capacities, with extensions available until 2016 for countries demonstrating progress toward implementation.

The regulations introduced the concept of a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), defined as "an extraordinary event which is determined to constitute a public health risk to other States through the international spread of disease and to potentially require a coordinated international response." The Director-General has the authority to declare a PHEIC based on advice from an Emergency Committee of international experts, with the declaration triggering enhanced surveillance and response measures globally.

## 10.2 Recent Amendments and Contemporary Developments

In an historic development, the World Health Assembly, the annual meeting of its 194 member countries, today agreed a package of critical amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR), and made concrete commitments to completing negotiations on a global pandemic agreement within a year, at the latest. The June 2024 amendments to the IHR represent the most significant changes to international health law since 2005, reflecting lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and evolving understanding of global health security threats.

The 2024 amendments strengthen surveillance and early warning systems, enhance

WHO's authority to coordinate international responses, and establish new mechanisms for equitable access to medical countermeasures during health emergencies. However, HHS Secretary and Secretary of State issued a joint statement of formal U.S. rejection of the 2024 International Heath Regulations (IHR) Amendments by the WHO. This rejection by a major WHO member state highlights ongoing tensions regarding national sovereignty and international health governance.

The amendments also introduce new provisions related to research and development coordination, technology transfer, and capacity building in low- and middle-income countries. These changes reflect recognition that pandemic preparedness requires not only surveillance and response capabilities but also the ability to develop and deploy medical countermeasures rapidly and equitably across all countries.

## 10.3 WHO Technical Advisory Group on Responsible Use of Life Sciences

The Technical Advisory Group on the Responsible Use of the Life Sciences and Dual-Use Research (TAG-RULS DUR) was established in November 2023 to provide independent advice to WHO including technical and strategic advice on relevant to the monitoring and mitigation of biorisks, advances in the life sciences and related technologies, the governance of dual-use research and the responsible use of the life sciences. This advisory group represents WHO's formal recognition of the need for specialized expertise in addressing dual-use research concerns.

The TAG-RULS DUR operates as an independent advisory body providing technical and strategic guidance to WHO on matters related to biosafety, biosecurity, and dual-use research governance. The group's mandate includes monitoring advances in life sciences and related technologies, assessing potential biorisks, and recommending appropriate governance mechanisms for dual-use research. This represents a significant expansion of WHO's traditional focus from natural disease emergence to human-made biological risks.

The advisory group's work complements existing WHO frameworks by providing specialized expertise in emerging biotechnologies and their potential applications for both beneficial and harmful purposes. This institutional development reflects recognition that traditional public health approaches may be insufficient for addressing the complex challenges posed by rapid advances in biotechnology and the dual-use nature of much biological research.

## 10.4 National and Regional Regulatory Frameworks

The governance of dual-use biotechnology occurs primarily at the national level, with significant variation in approaches and regulatory stringency across countries. On May 6, 2024, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) released an expanded and unified Policy for Oversight of Dual Use Research of Concern and Pathogens with Enhanced Pandemic Potential. This new U.S. government-wide policy, which combines the current dual use research of concern and enhanced potential pandemic pathogen oversight frameworks, expands the scope of research requiring additional scrutiny and strengthens our partnership with institutions to ensure robust review.

The United States approach represents one of the most comprehensive national frameworks for dual-use research oversight, establishing detailed procedures for identifying, reviewing, and monitoring research that could pose dual-use risks. The framework distinguishes between Dual Use Research of Concern (DURC) and research involving Pathogens with Enhanced Pandemic Potential (PEPP), with different oversight requirements for each category.

Other countries have developed their own approaches to dual-use research governance, often reflecting different balances between security concerns and scientific openness. The European Union has implemented regulations governing dual-use export controls and is developing frameworks for biotechnology oversight, while countries like Australia and Canada have established their own dual-use research review mechanisms. However, the lack of international harmonization in these approaches creates potential gaps in global oversight and may enable regulatory arbitrage.

# 11 MAIN CHALLENGES: IDENTIFYING CRITICAL IMPLEMENTATION GAPS

## 11.1 Technological Advancement Outpacing Regulatory Frameworks

THE RAPID pace of biotechnological advancement presents perhaps the most fundamental challenge to effective regulation of dual-use research and pathogen threats. Technologies that were considered cutting-edge research tools only a few years ago are now widely accessible, and the time required for regulatory development and international coordination often exceeds the speed of technological change. Gene editing technologies like CRISPR-Cas9 have become routine laboratory tools, while synthetic biology approaches enable the de novo creation of biological systems with unprecedented capabilities.

The democratization of biotechnology tools means that sophisticated biological research capabilities are no longer confined to well-resourced institutions in developed countries. Laboratory equipment that once required specialized facilities and extensive training can now be operated with minimal oversight, and biological design software enables researchers to develop novel organisms without traditional biological expertise. This accessibility expands the potential for beneficial applications but also increases the number of actors who could potentially misuse these technologies.

Artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies are increasingly integrated into biological research, enabling automated experimental design, high-throughput screening of biological systems, and predictive modeling of pathogen behavior. While these technologies accelerate legitimate research, they also potentially enable malicious actors to identify vulnerable targets, optimize biological agents for specific effects, or predict the impact of modifications to existing pathogens. The convergence of biotechnology with other emerging technologies creates novel risks that existing regulatory frameworks were not designed to address.

## 11.2 International Coordination and Sovereignty Tensions

The global nature of scientific research and pathogen threats requires international coordination, but such coordination often conflicts with national sovereignty concerns and diverse regulatory approaches. Countries maintain different perspectives on the appropriate balance between scientific openness and security restrictions, leading to inconsistent implementation of oversight measures. Some countries prioritize scientific advancement and international collaboration, while others emphasize strict security controls and information

protection.

The tension between transparency and security creates particular challenges for dual-use research governance. Scientific progress traditionally relies on open publication and peer review, but dual-use research may contain information that could be misused if widely disseminated. Different countries and institutions have adopted varying approaches to information sharing, ranging from complete openness to strict classification, making it difficult to establish consistent international standards.

Trade considerations further complicate international coordination efforts. Biotechnology represents a significant economic sector for many countries, and regulatory measures that restrict research or technology transfer may be viewed as trade barriers or attempts to limit competitive advantage. The dual-use nature of many biotechnologies means that restrictions intended to address security concerns may also impact legitimate commercial activities, creating resistance to comprehensive oversight measures.

## 11.3 Resource Disparities and Capacity Building Challenges

The implementation of effective dual-use research oversight and pathogen threat response requires significant technical expertise and institutional capacity that is unevenly distributed globally. Many countries lack the scientific infrastructure, regulatory expertise, and financial resources necessary to implement comprehensive oversight systems. This creates not only humanitarian concerns but also global security risks, as inadequate oversight in any country can potentially affect international security.

Developing countries often face competing priorities for limited health resources, with immediate disease burden taking precedence over longer-term security concerns. Building capacity for dual-use research oversight requires investments in regulatory institutions, scientific expertise, and monitoring systems that may seem less urgent than addressing existing health challenges. However, the global nature of both scientific research and pathogen threats means that gaps in any country's oversight capacity can undermine global security efforts.

The brain drain phenomenon, whereby qualified scientists and health professionals migrate from developing to developed countries, exacerbates capacity challenges. Countries that invest in training scientific and regulatory personnel may find that these individuals subsequently seek opportunities elsewhere, limiting the return on capacity building investments. This dynamic perpetuates global disparities in oversight capacity and makes it difficult for developing countries to establish sustainable regulatory systems.

## 11.4 Detection and Attribution Challenges

Distinguishing between natural disease emergence, laboratory accidents, and intentional misuse of biotechnology presents significant technical and political challenges. Natural pathogen evolution can produce characteristics similar to those that might result from laboratory manipulation, making it difficult to determine the origin of novel pathogens or unusual disease outbreaks. This uncertainty can lead to false accusations, diplomatic tensions, and delayed response efforts.

The attribution problem is particularly acute for subtle modifications that might enhance pathogen transmission or virulence without creating obvious signatures of human intervention. Advanced biotechnology techniques can introduce changes that appear natural, and the time required for forensic analysis may exceed the window for effective response measures. Even when technical analysis is possible, the specialized expertise required for such investigations is limited and may not be available in all countries.

Political considerations can further complicate attribution efforts, as countries may be reluctant to cooperate with investigations that might implicate their institutions or researchers in security breaches. The sensitive nature of dual-use research oversight can create incentives for countries to limit transparency about their regulatory processes or research activities, making it difficult to assess compliance with international agreements or identify potential risks.

## 11.5 Enforcement and Compliance Mechanisms

The current international framework lacks robust mechanisms for ensuring compliance with dual-use research oversight obligations or responding to violations of agreed standards. While the IHR establishes reporting requirements and response obligations, enforcement mechanisms are limited, and there are few consequences for countries that fail to meet their commitments. This creates a collective action problem where individual countries may have incentives to free-ride on others' oversight efforts.

The voluntary nature of many international frameworks limits their effectiveness in addressing dual-use research risks. Countries can choose to participate in cooperative initiatives or adopt recommended standards, but there are limited mechanisms for ensuring consistent implementation or addressing non-compliance. This is particularly problematic for dual-use research governance, where gaps in any country's oversight system can potentially undermine global security efforts.

Legal frameworks for addressing dual-use research violations often focus on domestic enforcement rather than international coordination. Countries may have different definitions of prohibited activities, varying penalty structures, and diverse approaches to prosecution,

making it difficult to coordinate responses to activities that cross national boundaries. The lack of harmonized legal standards also creates opportunities for regulatory arbitrage, where research activities migrate to jurisdictions with less stringent oversight.

# 12 AGENDA INTERPRETATION AND IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAYS

## 12.1 Strengthening Surveillance and Early Warning Systems

THE ENHANCEMENT of global surveillance systems represents a critical component of strengthening international health regulations in response to dual-use biotechnology and future pathogen threats. Modern surveillance must extend beyond traditional disease monitoring to include detection of unusual research activities, monitoring of biotechnology development, and assessment of emerging biological risks. This requires integration of health surveillance with security intelligence, scientific literature monitoring, and technology assessment capabilities.

Advanced surveillance systems must be capable of detecting both natural disease emergence and anomalous events that might indicate laboratory accidents or intentional misuse of biotechnology. This includes monitoring for unusual disease patterns, unexpected pathogen characteristics, and epidemiological features that deviate from known natural transmission patterns. Such systems require sophisticated analytical capabilities and close coordination between public health authorities, intelligence agencies, and scientific institutions.

The development of artificial intelligence and machine learning tools for surveillance enhancement offers significant potential for improving early detection capabilities. These technologies can analyze large datasets from multiple sources, identify unusual patterns, and provide early warning of potential threats. However, their implementation requires careful attention to privacy concerns, data sharing agreements, and validation of analytical algorithms to ensure reliable threat detection without excessive false alarms.

## 12.2 Developing Adaptive Regulatory Frameworks

Traditional regulatory approaches that rely on specific lists of controlled agents or prohibited activities may be insufficient for addressing the rapidly evolving landscape of biotechnology applications. Adaptive regulatory frameworks that can respond to emerging technologies and novel risks without requiring lengthy revision processes offer a more flexible approach to dual-use research governance. Such frameworks might establish general principles and risk assessment methodologies that can be applied to new situations as they arise.

Risk-based regulatory approaches that focus on potential consequences rather than specific technologies or agents may provide more comprehensive coverage of dual-use research activities. These approaches would assess research proposals based on their potential

for beneficial and harmful applications, the likelihood of misuse, and the availability of safeguards and oversight mechanisms. This requires development of standardized risk assessment methodologies and training for regulatory personnel in their application.

International harmonization of regulatory approaches, while respecting national sovereignty and diverse security concerns, could enhance the effectiveness of dual-use research oversight. This might involve development of common standards for risk assessment, shared databases of oversight decisions, and coordinated approaches to monitoring compliance with agreed standards. However, achieving such harmonization requires sustained diplomatic engagement and consensus-building among countries with diverse perspectives on biotechnology governance.

## 12.3 Enhancing International Cooperation and Information Sharing

Effective response to dual-use biotechnology and future pathogen threats requires unprecedented levels of international cooperation and information sharing. This includes sharing of threat intelligence, coordination of research oversight decisions, and collaborative development of response capabilities. However, such cooperation must balance security concerns with scientific openness and respect for national sovereignty and commercial interests.

The establishment of secure communication channels for sharing sensitive information about dual-use research activities and potential threats could enhance international coordination without compromising security. These channels would need to protect classified information while enabling appropriate information sharing among authorized personnel. The development of such systems requires careful attention to cybersecurity, access controls, and information classification standards.

International cooperation in capacity building efforts could help address disparities in oversight capabilities and strengthen global security. This might involve technical assistance programs, training exchanges, and collaborative development of oversight systems. However, such programs must be designed to respect recipient countries' sovereignty and avoid creating dependencies that could undermine long-term sustainability.

## 12.4 Building Public-Private Partnerships

The private sector plays an increasingly important role in biotechnology development and may possess critical expertise for assessing dual-use research risks. Building effective partnerships between government oversight bodies and private sector entities could enhance

regulatory capabilities while maintaining appropriate boundaries between public and private responsibilities. Such partnerships might involve industry advisory groups, shared threat assessment capabilities, and collaborative development of oversight standards.

Private sector entities may be more aware of emerging technologies and their potential applications than government regulators, making them valuable partners in identifying potential dual-use research risks. However, commercial interests may conflict with security concerns, and private entities may be reluctant to share proprietary information or limit potentially profitable research activities. Effective partnerships require careful alignment of incentives and clear definitions of roles and responsibilities.

The globalization of biotechnology research and development means that effective oversight requires engagement with multinational corporations and international research collaborations. This presents challenges for national regulatory authorities whose jurisdiction may be limited to domestic activities. International coordination of private sector engagement could help address these challenges while avoiding conflicting regulatory requirements that might drive research activities to jurisdictions with less stringent oversight.

## 12.5 Promoting Responsible Research Practices

The scientific community has a critical role to play in identifying and addressing dual-use research risks through the adoption of responsible research practices and self-governance mechanisms. Professional societies, academic institutions, and research funding organizations can establish standards for dual-use research review, promote awareness of potential risks, and develop best practices for minimizing harmful applications while preserving beneficial research.

Education and training programs for researchers, institutional review board members, and regulatory personnel could enhance awareness of dual-use research issues and improve the quality of risk assessments. Such programs should address both technical aspects of dual-use research identification and broader ethical considerations regarding the responsibility of scientists to consider the potential consequences of their work.

The development of international professional standards for dual-use research governance could complement government regulatory efforts and provide consistency across different institutional contexts. Professional societies and international scientific organizations could play a leading role in developing such standards and promoting their adoption globally. However, the effectiveness of self-governance mechanisms depends on strong institutional cultures of responsibility and appropriate incentives for compliance with professional standards.

# 13 CONCLUSION: TOWARD ENHANCED GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY

THE INTERSECTION of dual-use biotechnology and future pathogen threats represents one of the most complex challenges facing international health governance in the 21st century. The rapid advancement of biotechnology capabilities, combined with the global nature of scientific research and pathogen threats, requires unprecedented levels of international cooperation and adaptive regulatory approaches.

The strengthening of International Health Regulations in response to these challenges must balance multiple competing objectives: preserving the benefits of legitimate scientific research while preventing harmful applications; maintaining scientific openness while protecting security-sensitive information; respecting national sovereignty while achieving effective international coordination; and addressing immediate health needs while building capacity for long-term threat prevention.

Success in this endeavor will require sustained commitment from governments, international organizations, the scientific community, and private sector entities. It will demand significant investments in technical capacity, regulatory infrastructure, and international cooperation mechanisms. Most importantly, it will require recognition that global health security is a shared responsibility that transcends national boundaries and traditional sectoral divisions.

The agenda before this committee provides an opportunity to contribute to the development of more effective and equitable approaches to these challenges. Through careful analysis of existing frameworks, identification of critical gaps, and creative thinking about potential solutions, delegates can help chart a path toward enhanced global health security that serves the interests of all nations and peoples.

# 14 KEY QUESTIONS FOR DELEGATE CONSIDERATION

1. How can international health regulations be adapted to address rapidly evolving biotechnology capabilities while maintaining scientific innovation and international cooperation?
2. What mechanisms can be established to ensure equitable global access to the benefits of legitimate dual-use research while minimizing security risks?
3. How can capacity building efforts be structured to address global disparities in oversight capabilities without creating dependencies or undermining national sovereignty?
4. What role should the private sector play in dual-use research governance, and how can public-private partnerships be structured to align commercial interests with security concerns?
5. How can detection and attribution capabilities be enhanced to distinguish between natural disease emergence, laboratory accidents, and intentional misuse of biotechnology?
6. What enforcement mechanisms are appropriate for ensuring compliance with international agreements on dual-use research oversight?
7. How can information sharing arrangements be developed to enable effective international cooperation while protecting sensitive research and security information?
8. What ethical frameworks should guide decision-making about dual-use research oversight and the balance between beneficial applications and potential risks?

*This background guide is prepared for educational purposes in the context of Model United Nations activities and represents an analysis of publicly available information and policy documents as of July 2025.*

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For further research and preparation, delegates are encouraged to consult the following resources:

World Health Organization Official Website: https://www.who.int/

International Health Regulations (2005): https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241580496

WHO Technical Advisory Group on Responsible Use of Life Sciences

United Nations Office at Geneva: https://www.unog.ch/

Global Health Security Agenda: https://www.ghsagenda.org/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: https://www.cdc.gov/

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control: https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/