

15 June 2022

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s 9(2)(a)

By email: s 9(2)(a)
Ref: H202206352

Tēnā koe s 9(2)(a)

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 15 May 2022. You asked for information relating to New Zealand and the proposed amendments to the International Health Regulations at the 75th World Health Assembly 22nd Information. Specifically:

Has the Ministry of Health put forward its views on the on the Proposed Amendments to the International Health Regulations at the 75th World Health Assembly 22nd?

If so please supply the documents."

The Ministry has identified one document within the scope of your request, specifically a copy of New Zealand's national intervention (short statement) on this issue to the 75th World Health Assembly. This was delivered by the New Zealand delegation during discussion of the agenda item "*Public health emergencies: preparedness and response*". Please refer to the attached document, which is released to you in full. We also provide here a link to the World Health Assembly website, for your further information <https://www.who.int/about/governance/world-health-assembly>.

The International Health Regulations 2005 (IHR) are the authoritative World Health Organization (WHO) framework for preventing and controlling the spread of infectious disease and other hazards that may pose a global risk to public health. The IHR grew out of the need to respond to deadly epidemics, and create rights and obligations for countries, including the requirement to report public health events. The IHR are legally-binding for 196 countries, including the 194 World Health Organization (WHO) Member States.

Ensuring the IHR remain fit for purpose and protected as a vital part of our global health architecture is a priority for New Zealand.

I trust this fulfils your request. Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602. Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases.

Nāku noa, nā



Sarah Turner
Deputy Director-General
Office of the Director-General

Item 16: Public health emergencies: preparedness and response

New Zealand intervention on 16.2 and 16.4

Word count: 260

- Thank you Chair.
- Aotearoa New Zealand wishes to acknowledge the WHO for its steadfast leadership in recent health emergencies, in particular the COVID-19 pandemic. Importantly, WHO is working to integrate the principle of equity across its work in health emergencies, which New Zealand strongly supports.
- New Zealand thanks the members of the Working Group on Strengthening WHO Preparedness and Response to Health Emergencies (WGPR), in particular the Co-Chairs, and the United States for its proactive approach to identifying opportunities to strengthen the International Health Regulations and the amendments it has proposed – many of which New Zealand sees value in. We would like to formally register our co-sponsorship of this resolution.
- New Zealand sees the modification of Article 59 as an important step towards ensuring the responsiveness of the IHR to future pandemics and supporting the timely implementation of any future changes to the IHR.
- As Member States, we are now responsible for agreeing the future process for amendments to the IHRs. Let's take on that responsibility and maintain the momentum. As we heard from in the technical briefing from the secretariat this morning, we are now in the third year of a global pandemic that is far from over. Acting now is not premature, rather it is an imperative.
- New Zealand supports the process from here being inclusive and transparent to facilitate the engagement of all Member States to the best of their ability. It is also essential that it is closely aligned with the work of the INB and the proposed IHR Review Committee, to ensure that the renewed system has the coherence it needs.
- New Zealand will remain fully engaged in this process.
- Thank you Chair.

ENDS