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The National Assembly
of the Kingdom of Thailand



World Health
Organization

Regional Conference for Parliaments of the Asia-Pacific Region on Global Health Security

2–3 December 2024, Bangkok (Thailand)

Jointly organized by the Parliament of Thailand and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU),
in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO)

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Global health crises impact all segments of society and no community in the world is fully protected against them. The consequences of being ill-prepared for responding to health emergencies can be measured in deaths, affected livelihoods, devastated families and communities, reduced economic opportunities and lost years of good health and societal development. The COVID-19 pandemic as well as the most recently declared multi-country outbreak of Mpox and all other public health emergencies of international concern subjected global and country emergency preparedness and response to a tough stress test. The IPU Asia-Pacific region has seen a broad range of health emergencies, including man-made and natural disasters, and new health risks, including antimicrobial resistance and emerging infectious diseases, 70% of which are zoonotic in origin. This is set against a rapidly changing landscape of trade, consumption and demographics.

Parliaments and parliamentarians play a unique role in achieving preparedness by advocating for and adopting legislation that increases health emergency preparedness; in ensuring health emergency preparedness and response capacities are adequately funded and flexible enough to fund a response to an unexpected health emergency; and in overseeing the government's implementation of health emergency preparedness and response plans. However, no parliament and no country can prevent pandemics alone. Building on the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic, Member States of the World Health Organization (WHO) have agreed on amendments to the International Health Regulations (IHR, 2005) and are in the process of negotiating a new pandemic accord. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has been working closely with the WHO to raise awareness among parliamentarians of key global health security challenges and instruments and to strengthen parliaments' engagement in health emergency preparedness. To that end, in 2022, the IPU and WHO jointly published a handbook for parliamentarians entitled [*Strengthening health security preparedness: The International Health Regulations \(2005\)*](#).

The Regional Conference for Parliaments of Asia-Pacific on global health security is the second of a series of regional conferences on the subject matter, aimed at keeping health security high on country and regional agendas and crafting a pathway to more resilient and prosperous societies.

Content and objectives

The Conference will discuss health security risks in the Asia-Pacific region. It will brief parliamentarians on developments in the global architecture for health emergency prevention, preparedness, response and resilience and provide concrete tools and examples for parliamentary action. Cross-cutting topics that will be addressed include social trust, leadership, and resilience-building, as well as the One Health concept and inclusive multistakeholder collaboration.

The objectives of the Conference are to:

- Provide a platform for parliaments in Asia-Pacific to raise awareness of the latest developments in the global architecture for health emergency prevention, preparedness, response and resilience and the amendment of the IHR (2005).
- Promote dialogue with experts and among parliamentarians, including on capacity needs in parliaments to engage on health security.
- Discuss common solutions to health emergencies, including pandemics, and identify opportunities for parliaments to strengthen their role in health emergency preparedness at the national and regional level.

Organization

The Conference is organized by the Parliament of Thailand and the IPU, in collaboration with WHO. It will take place on 2 and 3 December 2024 in Bangkok, Thailand.