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WHA Global Parliamentary Forum

From commitment to action: Advancing parliamentary leadership for the WHO Pandemic Agreement implementation and sustainable financing for health

Wednesday, 20 May, 13:00–14:30, Room A, WHO building

Background

The World Health Assembly (WHA) Global Parliamentary Forum, co-organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), serves as an annual, dedicated platform for parliamentary engagement in the WHA. It provides a space for sustained dialogue, shared learning, and alignment between global health commitments and national action.

The **WHO Pandemic Agreement** was adopted by Member States in May 2025, with its opening for signature and consideration for national ratification dependent on the finalization of the **Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing (PABS) Annex** that the Intergovernmental Working Group on the WHO Pandemic Agreement (IGWG). Given the importance of further negotiations to finalize its work, the IGWG will recommend to WHA79 that the outcome of the work be presented to the Eightieth World Health Assembly for its consideration or, as may be necessary, earlier by a special session of the World Health Assembly in 2026. The PABS Annex adoption will mark a critical step as it will allow opening for signature and ratification of the WHO Pandemic Agreement, requiring Member States to translate global commitments into national legislation, policies, and financing frameworks. Key priorities in the coming months will be advocating for the finalization of the PABS Annex and preparation for entry into force of the WHO Pandemic Agreement — to be followed by its effective implementation at country level.

Delivering on the WHO Pandemic Agreement and better health outcomes for all people will depend not only on political commitment, but also on the availability of **sustainable and predictable financing**. Strengthening pandemic prevention, preparedness, resilient health systems and equitable access to health services requires countries to mobilize and allocate adequate domestic resources, while also contributing to global health efforts. Parliaments are uniquely positioned to advance this agenda by adopting enabling legislation, approving budgets, and exercising oversight to ensure that resources are effectively mobilized and directed toward national health priorities.

The Forum will provide an opportunity for parliamentarians and other stakeholders to exchange experiences and identify **practical, actionable measures** to support both the ratification and implementation of the WHO Pandemic Agreement and the advancement of sustainable financing for health, including through the strategic use of health taxes.

The event will be open to members of parliament attending the WHA as part of their national delegations, as well as to WHO Member State representatives, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders and partners attending the WHA79.



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Objectives

- Strengthen parliamentary leadership in translating WHA commitments into national laws, policies and budgets.
- Support parliamentarians in advancing future signature, ratification and implementation of the WHO Pandemic Agreement.
- Equip parliaments with practical approaches to legislation, oversight and budget scrutiny for pandemic preparedness and health system resilience.
- Strengthen parliamentary leadership in sustainable health financing, including through domestic resource mobilization and health taxes.
- Promote peer learning among parliamentarians on effective national approaches to implementation and health financing.

Light refreshment will be served before the event.



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Draft Agenda

High-level segment - Opening Remarks	
13:00	Opening by Chair
13:05	Keynote remarks: Advancing Health as a Human Right: The Role of Parliaments in Turning Commitments into Action Chair, Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary General, IPU Introduction to the Forum
Part 1 – From global commitments to national delivery: Parliamentary Action on the WHO Pandemic Agreement and Health Financing	
13:05	From Adoption to Action: The WHO Pandemic Agreement and the central role of parliaments
13:10	Dr. Nedret Emiroglu, Head of Secretariat for IGWG on the WHO Pandemic Agreement
13:10	Financing pandemic preparedness and health systems
13:15	The Role of Parliaments in Mobilizing Sustainable Resources including health taxes as a dual public health and fiscal instrument Dr. Kalipso Chalkidou, Director of Health Financing and Economics, WHO
Part 2 – Parliamentary Exchange: From Experience to Action – Spotlight interventions	
13:15	Parliamentary Perspectives: Turning Commitments into National Action
13:30	Guiding questions: ✓ <i>Is your Parliament ready to expedite the signing, advance consideration of ratification and implementation of the WHO Pandemic Agreement? What actions have been taken? What are the hardest barriers you can face?</i> ✓ <i>Is your country ready to implement the Agreement? How are you working to secure sustainable financing for health, including through domestic resource mobilization? Have health taxes been considered?</i>
Part 3 – Interactive dialogue	
13:30	Open discussion with parliamentarians and other stakeholders
14:10	Focus areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratification and implementation of the WHO Pandemic Agreement • Financing and budgetary action Guiding questions: ✓ <i>What steps can your Parliament take or is already planning to expedite the signing, advance consideration of ratification and implementation of the WHO Pandemic Agreement?</i> ✓ <i>How are you working to secure sustainable financing for health, including through domestic resource mobilization?</i> ✓ <i>Have you introduced or considered health taxes (e.g. on tobacco, alcohol, sugary drinks) to improve health outcomes and generate revenue?</i>
Part 4 – Closing and Looking Forward	
14:25	Keynote remarks: Global health priorities at a turning point for multilateralism Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, WHO Closing remarks and way forward “From discussion to implementation—this now moves to your parliaments.” Chair, Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary-General, IPU