



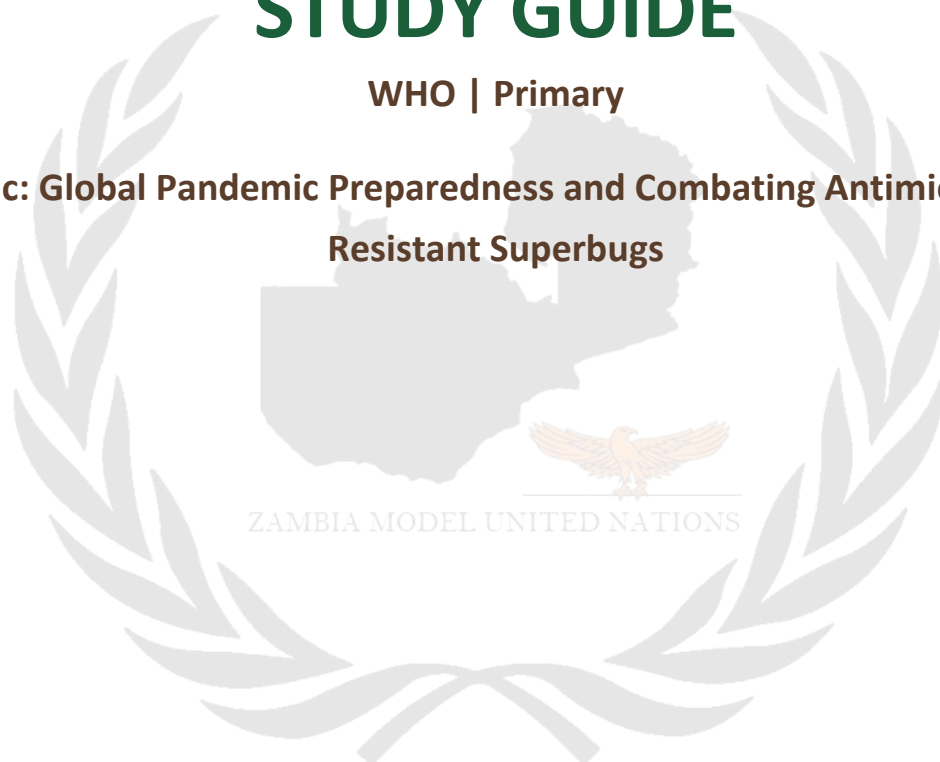
LUSAKA OAKTREE SCHOOL MODEL UNITED NATIONS
LOTSMUN 2026

***Architects of Accountability** • Redefining Power, Peace and Progress*

STUDY GUIDE

WHO | Primary

Topic: Global Pandemic Preparedness and Combating Antimicrobial-Resistant Superbugs



Message from the Secretary General

Dear Delegates,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to LOTSMUN 2026.

This year, under the theme “Architects of Accountability: Redefining Power, Peace and Progress,” we invite you to consider not only how decisions are made but who is responsible for them, who is affected by them and how meaningful change can be achieved.

Model United Nations is more than an exercise in public speaking. It is an opportunity to understand complex international problems, challenge assumptions, negotiate with people who may disagree with you and transform competing ideas into meaningful solutions.

As you prepare for this committee, I encourage you to look beyond the information presented in this study guide. The purpose of this document is not to provide you with every answer, but to provide you with the foundation from which your own research, perspectives, and ideas can develop.

Come prepared to question, collaborate, negotiate and most importantly, represent your country’s position with accuracy and diplomacy. Remember that accountability is not simply about holding power responsible; it is about understanding how power can be used to build peace, drive progress, and create meaningful change.

I look forward to seeing the ideas, debates, and solutions you bring into committee.

Malenji Arthur Jonah

Secretary General, LOTSMUN 2026

ZAMBIA MODEL UNITED NATIONS

1. The World Health Organization

1.1 What is the WHO?

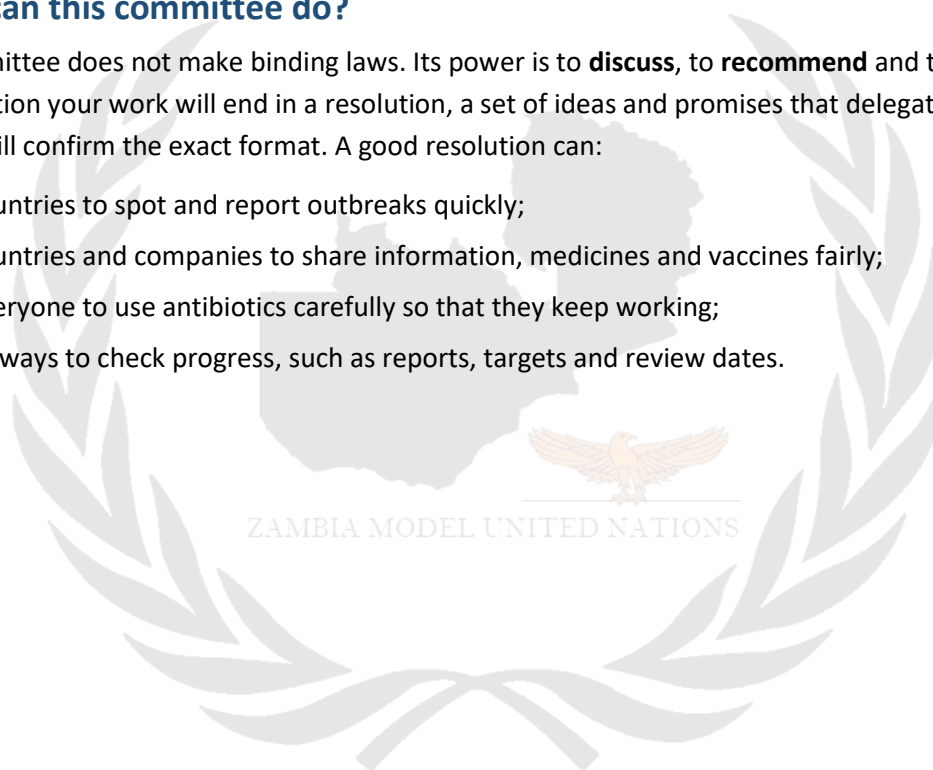
The World Health Organization (WHO) is the United Nations agency that coordinates international health work. It was founded in 1948 and has 194 member states.^{1,2} Its Director-General is Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.³ Every year, member states meet at the **World Health Assembly** to make decisions. In May 2025 the Assembly adopted the world's first Pandemic Agreement.⁴

In this simulation, you are a **member country** at a WHO meeting. WHO cannot order countries to act. Its recommendations are advice, and it helps countries agree on shared rules, so the choices countries make decide whether the world is ready for the next outbreak.

1.2 What can this committee do?

A WHO committee does not make binding laws. Its power is to **discuss**, to **recommend** and to **set priorities**. In this simulation your work will end in a resolution, a set of ideas and promises that delegates vote on. Your chairs will confirm the exact format. A good resolution can:

- ask countries to spot and report outbreaks quickly;
- ask countries and companies to share information, medicines and vaccines fairly;
- ask everyone to use antibiotics carefully so that they keep working;
- set up ways to check progress, such as reports, targets and review dates.



¹ World Health Organization. Q&A: International Health Regulations: amendments. <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/international-health-regulations-amendments>

² World Health Organization. WHO Pandemic Agreement. <https://www.who.int/health-topics/who-pandemic-agreement>

³ UN News. Nations adopt historic pledge to guard against future pandemics (World Health Assembly, 20 May 2025). <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/05/1163451>

⁴ UN News. Nations adopt historic pledge to guard against future pandemics (World Health... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

2. Introduction to the Topic

This topic has two parts. The first is **pandemic preparedness**: getting ready, before it happens, for the next disease that spreads across the world. The second is **antimicrobial resistance (AMR)**: when germs learn to survive the medicines that used to kill them. Germs that resist many medicines are often called **superbugs**. One is a sudden emergency and the other is a slow one, but both are about whether medicine and health systems will work when we need them.

Here is one way the problem builds up:



This is a simplified picture. AMR does not only happen after outbreaks, and not every outbreak becomes a pandemic. The link is that both depend on **good surveillance, strong health systems, clean water and hygiene and fair access to medicines**.⁵

2.1 The scale of the problem

Pandemics. WHO estimated that about **14.9 million** deaths were associated with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, either directly or because health systems were under strain. The range was 13.3 to 16.6 million. Of these, 81% were in middle-income countries.⁶

Superbugs. WHO's 2025 report found that one in six laboratory-confirmed bacterial infections worldwide in 2023 was resistant to antibiotics. Resistance rose in over 40% of the monitored bug-and-medicine combinations between 2018 and 2023.⁷ A study in *The Lancet* found that bacterial AMR directly caused 1.14 million deaths in 2021 and forecast 39 million deaths between 2025 and 2050 without action.⁸

14.9 million deaths were linked to COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021	1 in 6 bacterial infections was antibiotic resistant in 2023	39 million deaths from AMR are forecast between 2025 and 2050
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The burden is not shared equally. In WHO's report, 1 in 3 infections was resistant in the South-East Asia and Eastern Mediterranean regions, and 1 in 5 in Africa. Over 70% of *E. coli* samples in Africa resisted a first-line antibiotic. Yet 48% of countries did not report data in 2023, so we cannot see the full picture.⁹

⁵ World Health Organization. Antimicrobial resistance (fact sheet). <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/antimicrobial-resistance>

⁶ World Health Organization. 14.9 million excess deaths were associated with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 (5 May 2022). <https://www.who.int/news/item/05-05-2022-14.9-million-excess-deaths-were-associated-with-the-covid-19-pandemic-in-2020-and-2021>

⁷ PAHO/WHO. WHO warns of widespread resistance to common antibiotics worldwide (Global Antibiotic Resistance Surveillance Report 2025, 13 October 2025). <https://www.paho.org/en/news/13-10-2025-who-warns-widespread-resistance-common-antibiotics-worldwide>

⁸ University of Oxford. Antibiotic resistance has claimed at least one million lives each year since 1990 (Lancet GRAM study, 17 September 2024). <https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2024-09-17-antibiotic-resistance-has-claimed-at-least-one-million-lives-each-year-1990>

⁹ PAHO/WHO. WHO warns of widespread resistance to common antibiotics worldwide (Global Antibiotic... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

2.2 Why does it happen?

Slow detection. In the West African Ebola outbreak, weak disease surveillance let the germ spread quickly.¹⁰ **Unfair access.** The Pandemic Agreement was written to fix gaps in equal access to health products after COVID-19.¹¹ **Misuse of antibiotics.** AMR is driven by improper use of antibiotics, weak sanitation and hygiene, poor infection control and lack of vaccines and tests, and there are few new medicines being developed.¹² In Zambia, unqualified sellers sometimes give out antibiotics for colds and flu, which are caused by viruses that antibiotics cannot treat.¹³

2.3 Rules and tools to know

Many rules already exist. The challenge is making them work. Here are the ones you are most likely to use:

Rule or tool	What it says
Pandemic Agreement (2025)	Adopted on 20 May 2025 by 124 votes to none, with 11 abstentions. It sets up a Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing (PABS) system, a global supply chain network, and ways to fund prevention. It opens for ratification after the PABS annex is agreed, and comes into force after 60 ratifications. ^{14,15}
International Health Regulations (2024 amendments)	Create a new alert level called a “pandemic emergency” for the most serious outbreaks. WHO says the amendments do not allow it to impose lockdowns or other measures on any country. ¹⁶
UN political declaration on AMR (2024)	Approved on 26 September 2024. It aims to cut the roughly 4.95 million yearly deaths linked to bacterial AMR by 10% by 2030, and it sets up an independent evidence panel. ¹⁷
One Health approach	Recognises that the health of people, animals, plants and the environment are closely linked, so AMR must be tackled in all of them together. ¹⁸

¹⁰ US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Overview, control strategies, and lessons learned in the CDC response to the 2014–2016 Ebola epidemic (MMWR). <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/su/su6503a2.htm>

¹¹ World Health Organization. WHO Pandemic Agreement... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

¹² World Health Organization. Antimicrobial resistance (fact sheet)... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

¹³ Down To Earth. Antibiotic resistance: how Zambia is trying to reign in AMR. <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/health/antibiotic-resistance-how-zambia-is-trying-to-reign-in-amr-68950>

¹⁴ UN News. Nations adopt historic pledge to guard against future pandemics (World Health... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

¹⁵ World Health Organization. WHO Pandemic Agreement... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

¹⁶ World Health Organization. Q&A: International Health Regulations: amendments... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

¹⁷ UN Environment Programme. World leaders commit to decisive action on antimicrobial resistance... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

¹⁸ UN Environment Programme. World leaders commit to decisive action on antimicrobial resistance... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

3. Key Definitions

These definitions are written in simple language and adapted from WHO and UN sources listed in the bibliography. Learn them, because you will use them in speeches and clauses.

Term	Meaning
Outbreak	A sudden rise in cases of a disease in a place.
Epidemic	A large outbreak that spreads quickly in a community or region.
Pandemic	An epidemic that spreads across many countries and affects a large number of people.
Pandemic emergency	The highest alert level in the 2024 IHR amendments, used when a serious international health emergency has, or may have, wide spread across several states and could overwhelm health systems. ¹⁹
Pandemic preparedness	Getting ready in advance, with plans, supplies, trained people and systems, so that a country can respond quickly to a disease outbreak. ²⁰
Surveillance	Watching for disease by collecting and checking health information, so that outbreaks are found early. ²¹
Contact tracing	Finding and following up with people who may have been near a sick person, to stop a disease spreading. ²²
Vaccine	A medicine, often an injection, that teaches the body to fight a disease before a person gets sick.
Health system	All the people, places, medicines and money that a country uses to keep its people healthy, including clinics, hospitals and health workers. ²³
Pathogen	A germ, such as a virus or bacterium, that causes disease. ²⁴
PABS (Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing)	A system in the Pandemic Agreement for countries to share samples of dangerous germs quickly, and to share the benefits, such as vaccines, fairly. ²⁵
Ratify	When a country formally agrees to be bound by a treaty. The Pandemic Agreement comes into force after 60 countries do so. ²⁶
Antimicrobial	A medicine that kills or stops germs, including antibiotics (for bacteria), antivirals, antifungals and antiparasitics. ²⁷

¹⁹ World Health Organization. Q&A: International Health Regulations: amendments... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²⁰ World Health Organization. WHO Pandemic Agreement... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²¹ US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Overview, control strategies, and lessons... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²² US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Overview, control strategies, and lessons... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²³ World Health Organization. 14.9 million excess deaths were associated with the COVID-19... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²⁴ World Health Organization. WHO Pandemic Agreement... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

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²⁶ World Health Organization. WHO Pandemic Agreement... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²⁷ World Health Organization. Antimicrobial resistance (fact sheet)... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

Term	Meaning
Antibiotic	A medicine that treats infections caused by bacteria. It does not work on viruses such as colds and flu. ²⁸
Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)	When bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites stop responding to the medicines that used to treat them, making infections harder to treat. ²⁹
Superbug	A germ that resists many medicines, so that few treatments still work.
Misuse of antibiotics	Taking antibiotics when they are not needed, for the wrong illness, or not finishing the course, which helps germs become resistant. ^{30,31}
Stewardship	Programmes that make sure antibiotics are used only when needed, and in the right way. ³²
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene, meaning clean water, toilets and handwashing. ³³
One Health	An approach that treats the health of people, animals, plants and the environment as closely linked. ³⁴
National Action Plan (NAP)	A country's plan for fighting AMR, usually involving many sectors. ³⁵
Cholera	A disease caused by drinking dirty water or eating dirty food, which causes severe diarrhoea and can be deadly without treatment. ³⁶
Accountability	Making sure that people and institutions answer for what they do, through reports, checks and honest results.

²⁸ Down To Earth. Antibiotic resistance: how Zambia is trying to reign in AMR... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

²⁹ World Health Organization. Antimicrobial resistance (fact sheet)... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

³⁰ World Health Organization. Antimicrobial resistance (fact sheet)... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

³¹ Down To Earth. Antibiotic resistance: how Zambia is trying to reign in AMR... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

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³³ UN Environment Programme. World leaders commit to decisive action on antimicrobial resistance... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

³⁴ UN Environment Programme. World leaders commit to decisive action on antimicrobial resistance... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

³⁵ WHO Regional Office for Africa. Multi-sectoral National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance 2017–2027 (Zambia).

<https://www.afro.who.int/publications/multi-sectoral-national-action-plan-antimicrobial-resistance-2017-2027>

³⁶ WHO Regional Office for Africa. Zambia: rallying to control cholera outbreak... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

4. Case Studies

These cases show the problems and some solutions in real life. Facts come from the sources in the bibliography. Numbers can change and some are estimates, so check dates and methods. **You must represent your assigned country's view.**

4.1 COVID-19: the pandemic that changed everything

WHO estimates that about 14.9 million deaths were associated with the COVID-19 pandemic between January 2020 and December 2021, and that 84% of them were in South-East Asia, Europe and the Americas. Sixty-eight percent were in just ten countries, and 81% were in middle-income countries.³⁷ The Director-General said the data point to “the need for all countries to invest in more resilient health systems”.³⁸ The Pandemic Agreement was written to help fix the gaps COVID-19 revealed, with a focus on fairness and solidarity.³⁹

4.2 Ebola in West Africa: a threat in one country is a threat everywhere

Between 2014 and 2016, an Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone led to 28,652 suspected, probable and confirmed cases and 11,325 deaths, more than all earlier Ebola outbreaks combined. Weak disease surveillance let it spread, and health systems were overwhelmed. Responders used case isolation, contact tracing and safe burial, and trained about 24,600 health workers on infection prevention.⁴⁰ The lesson, in the words of one report, is “that all countries are connected and that a threat in one country is a threat everywhere”.⁴¹

4.3 Zambia: stopping cholera

Cholera returned to Zambia on 15 October 2023 and peaked in January 2024, with Lusaka as the centre. By 23 July 2024 there had been 23,382 cases and 740 deaths, and new cases had stopped by mid-July. The response used vaccines (4.1 million doses over two rounds, supplied with Gavi and UNICEF), better water, sanitation and hygiene, daily household visits to find cases, and community treatment centres. WHO sent 23 international experts, trained over 800 health workers and supplied 25 tonnes of equipment.⁴²

4.4 The rise of superbugs

Bacterial AMR has killed at least one million people every year since 1990. In 2021 it directly caused 1.14 million deaths, and the Lancet study forecast 1.91 million a year by 2050, or 39 million between 2025 and 2050. Deaths among children under five fell by 50% since 1990, thanks to vaccines and better sanitation, but deaths among adults over 70 rose by over 80%. South Asia is expected to have the most deaths, with sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia also badly affected.⁴³

³⁷ World Health Organization. 14.9 million excess deaths were associated with the COVID-19... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

³⁸ World Health Organization. 14.9 million excess deaths were associated with the COVID-19... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

³⁹ World Health Organization. WHO Pandemic Agreement... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴⁰ US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Overview, control strategies, and lessons... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴¹ US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Overview, control strategies, and lessons... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴² WHO Regional Office for Africa. Zambia: rallying to control cholera outbreak... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴³ University of Oxford. Antibiotic resistance has claimed at least one million lives each year... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

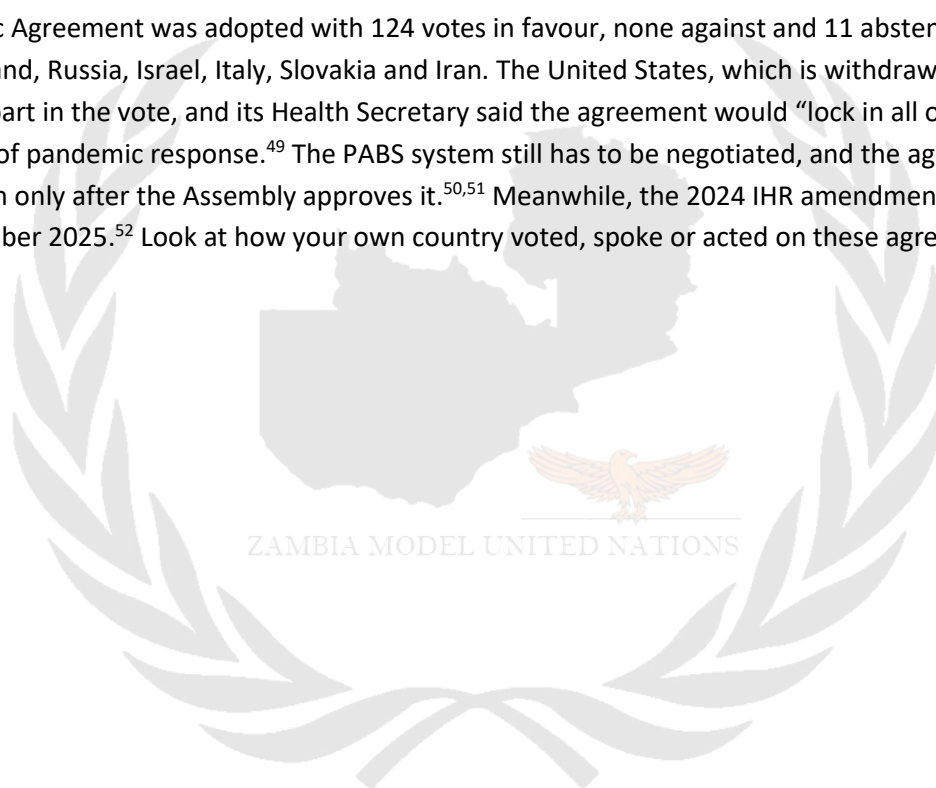
WHO's 2025 surveillance report adds that resistance is highest in *E. coli* and *K. pneumoniae* bloodstream infections. Over 40% of *E. coli* worldwide resist a first-line antibiotic, and over 70% in Africa. The number of countries reporting to the WHO's surveillance system rose from 25 in 2016 to 104 in 2023, but half of reporting countries lack reliable systems, especially the countries most affected.⁴⁴

4.5 Zambia and antibiotic resistance

Zambia has found resistance in several diseases, including multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, HIV, malaria and fungal infections.⁴⁵ Its National Action Plan on AMR, launched in November 2017 and running to 2027, uses a "One Health" approach across human health, animals, agriculture and the environment.^{46,47} Zambia has also piloted a stewardship policy in five facilities.⁴⁸

4.6 New rules, unfinished business

The Pandemic Agreement was adopted with 124 votes in favour, none against and 11 abstentions, including Poland, Russia, Israel, Italy, Slovakia and Iran. The United States, which is withdrawing from WHO, did not take part in the vote, and its Health Secretary said the agreement would "lock in all of the dysfunction" of pandemic response.⁴⁹ The PABS system still has to be negotiated, and the agreement opens for ratification only after the Assembly approves it.^{50,51} Meanwhile, the 2024 IHR amendments took effect on 19 September 2025.⁵² Look at how your own country voted, spoke or acted on these agreements.



⁴⁴ PAHO/WHO. WHO warns of widespread resistance to common antibiotics worldwide (Global Antibiotic... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴⁵ WHO Regional Office for Africa. Multi-sectoral National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴⁶ WHO Regional Office for Africa. Multi-sectoral National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁴⁷ Down To Earth. Antibiotic resistance: how Zambia is trying to reign in AMR... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

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⁴⁹ UN News. Nations adopt historic pledge to guard against future pandemics (World Health... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

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⁵¹ World Health Organization. WHO Pandemic Agreement... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁵² World Health Organization. Q&A: International Health Regulations: amendments... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

5. Major Actors

5.1 Countries and regions

Your delegation may represent any country, and your country may not be listed here. The table shows broad patterns only. **Always check your country's recent statements, laws and policies before you rely on them.**

Type of country	What to expect
Countries that supported the Pandemic Agreement	A large majority, 124 countries, voted yes. Many stress fairness, sharing and technology transfer. ^{53,54}
Countries that abstained or stayed out	Eleven abstained, and the United States did not take part. They often worry about cost, control and sovereignty, so expect them to ask what the agreement requires. ⁵⁵
Countries with high AMR and weak surveillance	Regions such as South-East Asia, the Eastern Mediterranean and Africa have the highest rates of resistance, and many lack reliable data systems. They often ask for money, labs and training. ⁵⁶
Countries with strong health systems and research	Provide funding, science and new medicines, and often stress reporting, surveillance and accountability. ^{57,58}
Countries like Zambia	Face repeated outbreaks such as cholera, have a national AMR plan and limited data, and often ask for help with water, vaccines and laboratories. ^{59,60}

Almost every country says it wants to prevent pandemics and fight AMR. The disagreements tend to come over **money** (who pays), **sharing** (who gets samples, vaccines and profits) and **control** (how far WHO's rules can go).

5.2 Organisations and networks

- **WHO.** Leads global health work, runs surveillance reports such as GLASS and hosts the Pandemic Agreement.^{61,62}

⁵³ UN News. Nations adopt historic pledge to guard against future pandemics (World Health... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁵⁴ World Health Organization. WHO Pandemic Agreement... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁵⁵ UN News. Nations adopt historic pledge to guard against future pandemics (World Health... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁵⁶ PAHO/WHO. WHO warns of widespread resistance to common antibiotics worldwide (Global Antibiotic... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁵⁷ University of Oxford. Antibiotic resistance has claimed at least one million lives each year... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

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⁶⁰ Down To Earth. Antibiotic resistance: how Zambia is trying to reign in AMR... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁶¹ PAHO/WHO. WHO warns of widespread resistance to common antibiotics worldwide (Global Antibiotic... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁶² World Health Organization. WHO Pandemic Agreement... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

- **FAO, UNEP and WOA.** Join WHO in the Quadripartite on AMR, covering farms, the environment and animal health.⁶³
- **Gavi and UNICEF.** Help deliver vaccines, as in Zambia's cholera response.⁶⁴
- **US CDC.** Led a large response to Ebola in West Africa with about 4,000 staff involved.⁶⁵
- **Zambia National Public Health Institute (ZNPHI).** Zambia's public health agency, which helps fund and run AMR surveillance.⁶⁶
- **Health workers, pharmacists and communities.** They decide daily how medicines are used and how outbreaks are found.^{67,68}



⁶³ UN Environment Programme. World leaders commit to decisive action on antimicrobial resistance... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁶⁴ WHO Regional Office for Africa. Zambia: rallying to control cholera outbreak... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

⁶⁵ US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Overview, control strategies, and lessons... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

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⁶⁸ Down To Earth. Antibiotic resistance: how Zambia is trying to reign in AMR... (See earlier note or bibliography.)

6. Preparing for Committee

6.1 Questions a strong resolution answers

1. **What problem does it solve?** Spotting outbreaks, sharing medicines, AMR, or the link between them? In which place, and for whom?
2. **Who will do it?** Name who will run it, such as governments, hospitals, WHO, companies or communities.
3. **How will it be paid for?** Ideas without money or a plan stay ideas.
4. **Is it fair?** Will poorer countries get the same chance at vaccines, tests and medicines?
5. **Does it help us see the problem?** Surveillance and reporting are needed to know what is happening.
6. **Does it protect antibiotics?** Think about stewardship, infection prevention and clean water.
7. **How will it be checked?** Add reporting, and a date to review progress.
8. **Can it win support?** Will delegates from different regions and views vote for it?

6.2 Guiding questions for your research

1. How did your country handle COVID-19 or another recent outbreak?
2. Did your country vote for, abstain on, or stay out of the Pandemic Agreement? Why?
3. Does your country have a National Action Plan on AMR? Is it funded?
4. How does your country track disease and antibiotic resistance? Does it report data to WHO?
5. How are antibiotics sold and used in your country, in people and in farming?
6. What can your country realistically offer: money, labs, vaccines, training, science?
7. Which countries share your goals, and which will you need to persuade? Where would you compromise?

6.4 Where to research

- **WHO** website, including its pages on the Pandemic Agreement, the IHR and antimicrobial resistance.
- **WHO Global Antibiotic Resistance Surveillance Report (GLASS)**, for AMR data.
- **UN News** (news.un.org), for recent reports in plain language.
- **Your country's Ministry of Health**, for national plans and statistics.
- Your country's statements at the World Health Assembly and the UN.

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