

# Universal Health and Preparedness Review (UHPR) - FAQ

Update July 2024

## Background

### What is the Universal Health and Preparedness Review (UHPR)?

The Universal Health and Preparedness Review (UHPR) is an innovative, high-level, Member State-led review mechanism where countries voluntarily engage in regular, transparent peer-to-peer reviews of their comprehensive national health emergency preparedness capacities. Emphasizing high-level political engagement, multi-sectoral collaboration, and whole-of-society participation, the UHPR leverages lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and other significant public health emergencies to enhance the planning, resourcing, and implementation of priority actions for sustainable capacity building.

Through its high-level peer-to-peer dialogue, the UHPR promotes global cooperation, fostering a deeper sense of solidarity, mutual trust, and shared accountability. Ultimately, the UHPR contributes significantly to strengthening national, regional, and global health security, setting a precedent as the only global process of its kind.

### What is the purpose of the UHPR?

The purpose of the UHPR as stated by the WHO Director-General is to “Build mutual trust and accountability for health, by bringing nations together as neighbours, to support a whole-of-government approach to strengthening national capacities for pandemic preparedness, universal health coverage, and healthier populations”<sup>1</sup>.

### What is the added value of the UHPR?

The UHPR delivers added value at both national and global levels. These added values, identified through feedback and insights from countries that have implemented the UHPR, include:

At the national level, UHPR elevates and maintains health emergency preparedness to the highest level of government and high on the list of national priorities. It offers a unique and comprehensive vision, with unprecedented involvement from the country leaders and policymakers. It serves as a platform for multisectoral and whole-of-society engagement for health emergency capacity preparedness. It plays a crucial role in safeguarding the valuable gains

---

<sup>1</sup> WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the World Health Assembly - 9 November 2020  
<https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-world-health-assembly---9-november-2020>

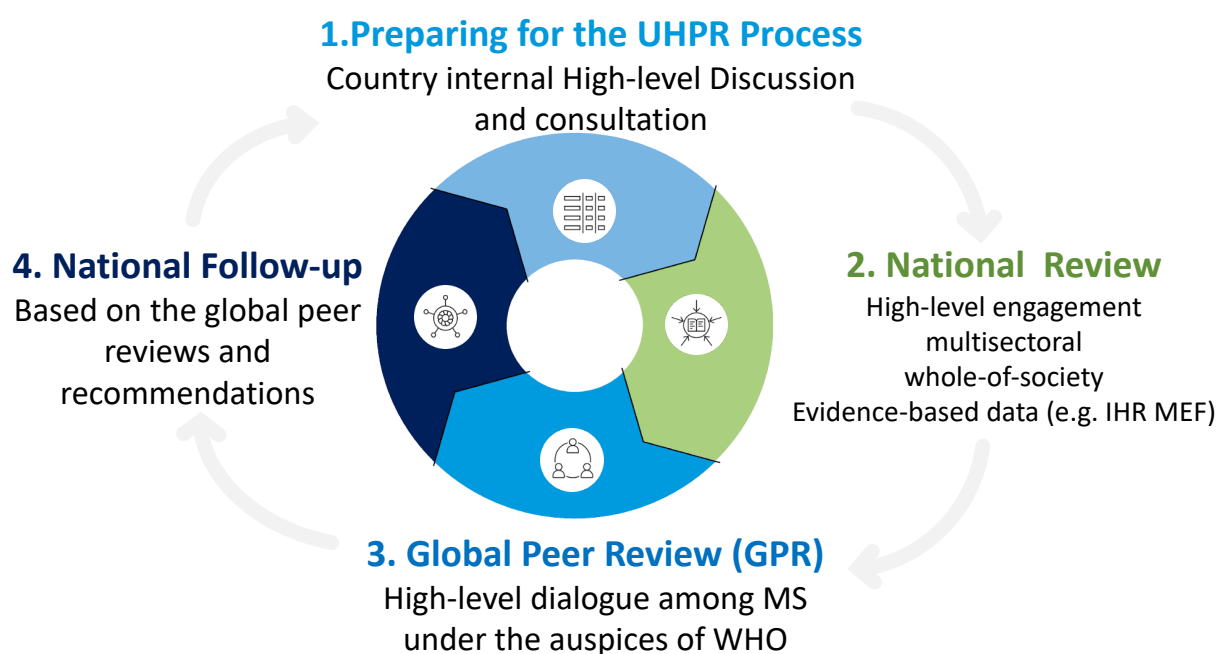
from the response to COVID-19 and other major public health emergencies. Additionally, the UHPR promotes predictable and sustainable investments in health emergency preparedness by helping to mobilize both domestic and international resources.

At the global level, UHPR ensures that health emergency preparedness remains a high priority on the global political agenda, in an effort to stop the cycle of "panic and neglect." It provides a platform for transparent and collaborative exchanges among nations in the spirit of global solidarity, promoting bilateral and multilateral cooperation and fostering mutual trust and shared accountability.

### **Which key stakeholders does the UHPR engage, and how does it involve them to achieve its objectives?**

To achieve its objectives, the UHPR process engages, high level government officials and policymakers, such as the president, prime minister, line ministers, and parliamentarians. Additionally, it engages key stakeholders from diverse sectors, partner organizations, and civil society. These national stakeholders, through their engagement in high-level, multisectoral, and whole-of-society evidence-based dialogue, play a pivotal role in achieving the objectives of the UHPR. They provide essential high-level and strategic insights and perspectives for the comprehensive review of country capacities and the identification of priorities aimed at strengthening health security. At the global level, the UHPR process involves high-level country representatives through peer-to-peer collaborative dialogue centered around the country's UHPR National Report, aimed at fostering accountability, mutual trust, and solidarity to bolster global health security.

## **Implementation**



The UHPR process consists of four phases. In the first phase, countries prepare the UHPR process, engaging in internal high-level discussions and consultations to secure commitment from country leadership. This preparation is crucial for ensuring a smooth and coordinated implementation of the UHPR process, setting the stage for effective national reviews and global peer-to-peer dialogues.

In the second phase, the national review phase, the highest-level authorities, policymakers, multi-sector stakeholders, partners, and civil society engage in a comprehensive and evidence-based dialogue. This dialogue draws on resources such as the IHR Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (IHR MEF), the National Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS), and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) reports. Its goal is to identify the country's best practices, challenges, and priorities for health emergency preparedness and response. The outcomes of these high-level, multisectoral, and whole-of-society discussions are documented in the UHPR National Report, the final product of this phase.

The third phase, the global peer review (GPR) phase, involves high-level peer-to-peer dialogue among Member States under WHO's auspices, where countries under review present their UHPR National Report and receive recommendations and suggestions from other Member States in a spirit of respect, solidarity, and cooperation.

Finally, the national follow-up phase involves implementing the priorities and recommendations from the national review and GPR phases, ensuring better planning, resource allocation, and monitoring and evaluation for continuous capacity building and strengthening in health emergency preparedness and response.

### **How much time does it take to complete the national phase?**

Completing the national phase of the UHPR process, which includes both preparing for the UHPR (phase one) and the national review (phase two), requires approximately six months.

### **What is the recommended frequency for conducting the UHPR?**

The UHPR process operates on a voluntary and regular basis, and it is recommended that Member States undergo the process every five years. This timeframe allows countries to thoroughly complete both the national and global phases of the UHPR process, followed by meticulous planning, resourcing, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of interventions to address identified priorities and recommendations. Additionally, the five-year duration facilitates a mid-term review, enabling countries to assess the level of implementation and adapt their capacity-building strategies accordingly.

## **Status**

### **What is the status of the UHPR?**

- Initially proposed by Central African Republic and Benin, WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus announced the launch of the voluntary pilot phase of the UHPR in November 2020.
- Through Resolution WHA 74.7 (2021), Member States requested the Director-General to

develop a detailed Concept Note for Member States' consideration.

- At WHA75 (May 2022) WHO Member States noted the UHPR Concept Note<sup>1</sup>.
- Between December 2020 and June 2024, eleven countries across five out of six WHO regions officially engaged in the UHPR process: Central African Republic, Iraq, Portugal, Thailand, Sierra Leone, Congo, Cameroon, Tanzania, Luxembourg, Dominican Republic, and Kyrgyzstan, listed in chronological order. The national review phase of UHPR has been completed in the first six countries.
- The inaugural UHPR Global Peer Review (GPR) took place on February 13 and 14, 2024, at the WHO Headquarters. During this event, CAR, Portugal, and Thailand underwent peer reviews of their UHPR national reports. Additionally, three other countries officially engaged in the UHPR process, namely Cameroon, Luxembourg, and Sierra Leone, participated as panelists. Notably, high-level officials including ministers, deputy ministers, and Secretary Generals represented countries under review and panelist countries thus, fostering a peer-to-peer discussion marked by respect, cordiality, and solidarity. Moreover, 180 country representatives from members states participated online, contributing to this global dialogue.
- At EB 154 (January 2024), a Decision on UHPR<sup>2</sup> was adopted. The decision requests the Director-General, in consultation with Member States, to continue developing the voluntary pilot phase of the UHPR and report to the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly, through the Executive Board at its 156th session, on lessons learned, implications, benefits, challenges and options for the next steps.
- At WHA 77 (May 2024) the EB decision EB154(9) on UHPR was approved by Member States.

---

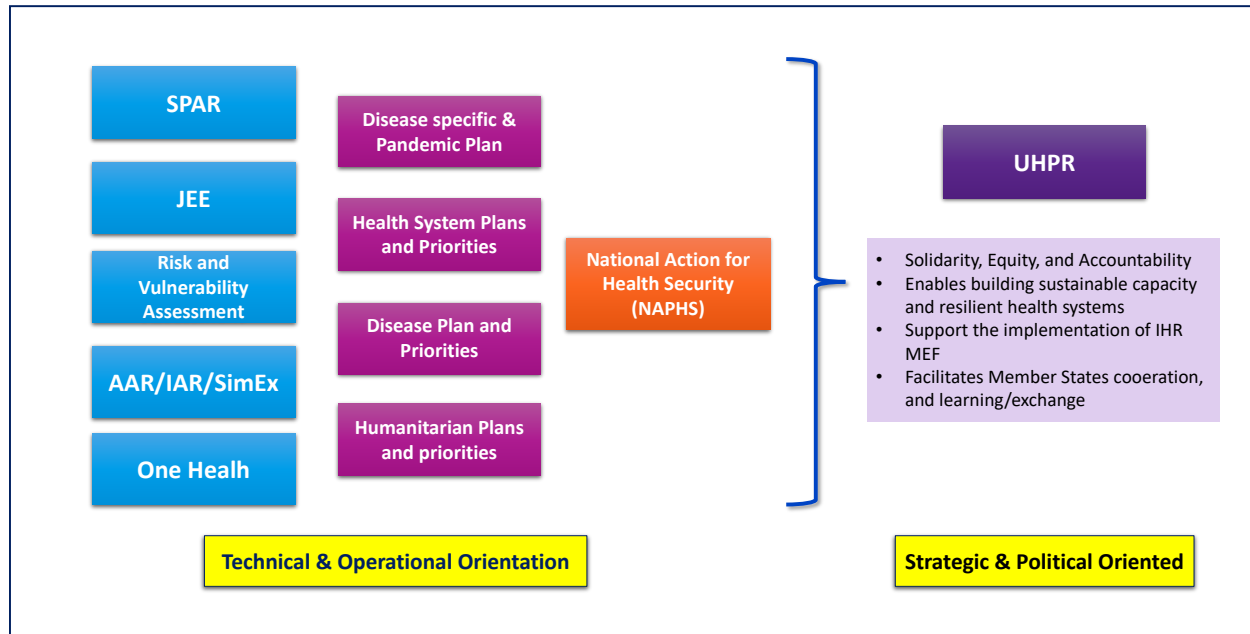
<sup>1</sup> UHPR Concept Note, WHA document A75/21, 2022, [Strengthening WHO preparedness for and response to health emergencies - Universal Health and Preparedness Review: concept note](#)

<sup>2</sup> [EB 154 Decision on the Universal health and preparedness review](#)

---

## Interactions with Existing IHR MEF Tools

How is the UHPR different from existing mechanisms such as the Joint External Evaluations (JEE)?



The UHPR leverages resources such as the International Health Regulations Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (IHR MEF), including the Joint External Evaluation (JEE), and action plans like the NAPHS. While existing assessment and planning tools focus on technical and operational aspects, the UHPR stands out with a unique, strategic, and politically oriented approach that complements these tools.

Regarding the main differences between the UHPR and JEE, while the JEE evaluates countries' technical capacities for health security, the UHPR assesses strategic capacities for health security in the areas of governance, systems, and financing, as well as other relevant capacities in health systems and Universal Health Coverage (UHC) that contribute to health security.

The JEE is a bottom-up approach that, during its national phase, engages the country's experts from relevant sectors up to the level of the minister of health. In contrast, the UHPR follows a top-down approach, engaging the country's highest-level leaders (president, vice president, prime minister, line ministers), policymakers (parliamentarians), experts from relevant sectors, partners, and civil society.

During the peer review phase, while the JEE engages countries in a technical peer review gathering national and international JEE area experts, the UHPR engages countries in a strategic global peer review gathering representatives from all WHO member states.

Overall, the UHPR promotes higher-level country ownership, broader stakeholder engagement, and stronger Member State solidarity, thereby fostering accountability, mutual trust, and solidarity for enhancing national and global health security.

**Will the UHPR replace existing monitoring, evaluation, assessment, and capacity-building tools?**

The UHPR does not replace any of the current tools or assessment processes currently in place; rather, it uses the outcomes from the various tools within the IHR MEF and beyond and builds on all these processes and findings by including data on key categories that are not evaluated within existing monitoring and evaluation processes.

In addition, the UHPR will help link the key areas and priorities of the WHO Thirteenth General Programme of Work (GPW 13), particularly emergency preparedness, universal health coverage, and healthier populations, to provide a holistic view of national capacities to address health emergencies. Thus, the UHPR will contribute to establishing a high-level platform for multisectoral and whole-of-society engagement to better address national and global health security challenges.

**Where can I find more information on the UHPR?**

For more information on the UHPR process, documents and events, please visit our website: [UHPR Webpage](#)

The WHO UHPR Secretariat can be contacted by email at: [UHPR@who.int](mailto:UHPR@who.int)