



PRESS RELEASE

[FINAL]

The World needs an Effective WHO for Global Health: Accelerating the Transformation Journey

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Geneva – In an era marked by intricate health challenges ranging from pandemics, climate change, health inequalities, to sudden-onset emergencies, the World Health Organization (WHO) faces unprecedented demand. The 2024 MOPAN assessment of the WHO – launched today by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Network (MOPAN) in Geneva, takes stock of WHO's successes over the past five years and points to areas where WHO needs to accelerate its progress.

Balancing a normative role with targeted country support

With its mandate to promote health and safety while helping the vulnerable worldwide, WHO is the leading international authority on public health in the multilateral system - both in terms of technical expertise and of health diplomacy. "WHO is unique in being the key player when it comes to norms, guidance and standards" says Suzanne Steensen, Head of the MOPAN Secretariat. "Yet at the same time, it is increasingly asked to respond to crises and emergencies at country level. This means marrying two roles that require fundamentally different skills and organisational systems."

The MOPAN assessment underscores the progress WHO has made on its reform journey since our previous assessment in 2018. During the COVID-19 pandemic, WHO showcased its speed and agility, which are capabilities that are critical as the organisation in facing increasingly complex challenges in delivering on its mandate.

The assessment also commends WHO and its Member States for their bold steps towards greater financial predictability and flexibility. This initiative, if implemented correctly, will support the continued reform efforts and enhance WHO's impact on the ground. WHO's transparency in reporting and its budget and allocation mechanisms are strong assets that have earned the organisation trust among its funders.

Accelerating reforms

Hot on the heels of WHO's *Fourteenth Program of Work* (GPW14), the MOPAN report reveals that WHO's transformation started in 2017 is far from complete and demands a renewed drive to achieve its bold vision.

Building more delivery capacity at country level to work even more closely with partners should be one of the priorities. Another is to become an organisation that better understands how its actions make a plausible contribution to country and global health outcomes. How else would it demonstrate how it contributes to the Triple Billion targets?

Making that step by boosting organizational learning culture, including through evaluations, will allow WHO to not only strengthen accountability and also the organisation's value proposition in an increasingly crowded global health architecture. This is especially crucial as WHO vies for the trust of funders and embarks on its first-ever investment round.

The MOPAN assessment also puts a spotlight on WHO's efforts to draw lessons from the allegations of sexual misconduct during the 10th Ebola Outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It commends WHO for having put in place a state-of-the art policy suite and impressive human resources capacity to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct. At the same time, it cautions that only sustained efforts and resources over the years will lead to culture change.

"WHO values these assessments as organizational learning opportunities, as we continue progressing on a variety of system and accountability reforms," said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "I am committed to making use of the insights from this assessment as we work together to build a healthier, safer, and fairer world for all."

The three institutional lead countries also welcomed the assessment. Canadian Ambassador Leslie Norton stated that "the MOPAN findings provide a pulse check on key dimensions of WHO's operations, including its ability to convene Member States, its normative and standard setting function, its provision of technical assistance, and its support to countries facing health emergencies. These findings are an important informative resource for WHO and all Member States as we work together to further strengthen organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness." Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve of Belgium described the MOPAN assessment as "a valuable resource as WHO continues its reform efforts, maximizes its organizational effectiveness and impact. This is crucial in order to remain as relevant and fit-for-purpose as possible in a rapidly changing global context." "Luxembourg," as Ambassador Marc Bichler added, "particularly appreciates the MOPAN assessment reports as they provide an objective and in-depth assessment of the multilateral organisations we support and thereby allow us to engage in strategic dialogue."

The Multilateral Organisation Performance Network (MOPAN) is an independent, open and growing network of 22 member states. Its performance assessments are conducted inclusively and transparently, serving as Global Public Goods. MOPAN's aim is to enhance knowledge and trust among multilateral stakeholders who share the common goal of an effective multilateral system. This assessment was championed by Belgium, Canada and Luxembourg.

For further information on MOPAN, or about this MOPAN Assessment of the WHO, please contact: assessments@mopanonline.org