

WHO: PH ASSUMES KEY ROLE AS CO-FACILITATOR IN PANDEMIC TREATY NEGOTIATIONS



PH delegation to the INB Drafting Group meeting, 4-6 September 2023, Geneva (from left): Ms. Pilar Binuya, Philippine Mission Geneva; Ms. Athena de Guzman, DOH, Atty. Carmela Ujano, DOH; Asec. Cherryl Ontalan, DOH, Dir. Ann Edillon, IPOPHIL; and Mr. Jeff Valdez, Philippine Mission.

The Philippines began its role as one of the co-facilitators in the ongoing negotiations on the Pandemic Treaty. During the Drafting Group Meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) held on 4-6 September 2023 at the World Health Organization in Geneva, the Philippines, together with Colombia and Saudi Arabia, led Member State discussions on *Co-development and transfer of technology and know-how*, one of the more challenging issues that will operationalize the proposed instrument.

The Philippines was appointed as a Co-facilitator by fellow Member States during the 6th Meeting of the INB in July 2023. Co-facilitators are entrusted to help find convergence in the most crucial topics covered by the Pandemic Treaty.

“There is broad agreement among Member States that there is a need for a specific Article on Tech Transfer in the Pandemic Treaty that would help expand access to countermeasures through diversification and decentralization of production,” First Secretary Jeff Valdez of the Philippine Mission in Geneva said during the meeting. “Where there appears to be divergence is the extent to which such transfer of technology should be voluntary or mandatory so this is what we hope to address in the next sessions,” he added.

The other Member States appointed as Co-facilitators for different topics are Australia, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Norway, Pakistan, Tanzania and United Kingdom. The Philippines, Colombia and Saudi Arabia will conduct additional sessions in September 2023 as requested by Member States.



Pandemic Treaty Co-facilitators on Technology Transfer during the Drafting Group Meeting, 4 September 2023, WHO Headquarters in Geneva (from left): Mr. Jeff Valdez, Philippines; Ms. Maria Juliana Tenorio, Colombia; and Mr. Rakan Bin Dohaish, Saudi Arabia.

“The Philippines is fully committed to the Pandemic Treaty negotiations and we welcome the trust and support from fellow WHO Member States,” remarked Ambassador Carlos Sorreta, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations in Geneva. He added, “We will ensure that all sides are given the opportunity to present their views while being mindful of the prescribed timeline.”

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Body was established by WHO Member States in December 2021 to draft and negotiate a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. It is expected to provide a consensus text of the Pandemic Treaty by May 2024.

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