7 July 2015 - The World Health Organization (WHO) welcomes the report from the Ebola Interim Assessment Panel and thanks the hard-working members for their rapid review, analysis and recommendations.

The panel members divided their review and recommendations into three areas: the International Health Regulations, WHO's health emergency response capacity and WHO's role and cooperation with the wider health and humanitarian systems.

The International Health Regulations

In August, the Director-General will convene a Review Committee of the International Health Regulations, where Member States can discuss the recommendations of the panel, including the idea of establishing an intermediate level of alert to sound an alarm earlier than a full Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

WHO's health emergency response capacity

The panel reiterated the need for a unified programme for health emergencies as committed to by the Director-General at the World Health Assembly to unite resources for emergencies across the three levels of the Organization.

WHO is already moving forward on some of the panel's recommendations including the development of the global health emergency workforce and the contingency fund to ensure the necessary resources are available to mount an initial response.

WHO's role and cooperation with the wider health and humanitarian systems

The Ebola outbreak highlighted the separation between systems for responding to health emergencies and systems for humanitarian response, and WHO agrees they must be better integrated for future emergency responses. This includes considering ways to coordinate the grading of its humanitarian emergencies with the grading of declarations of health emergencies under the International Health Regulations.

Going forward

The current Ebola outbreak is still ongoing and improved methods of working are incorporated into the response as they are developed. But it will take many more months of continued hard work to end the outbreak and to prevent it from spreading to other countries. WHO is grateful for the commitment from all partners; it is essential to get to zero cases and to put in place the systems to stay there.