

advocacy and the well-being of women and girls. Panellists also share knowledge of the international system, including WHO, and other relevant international processes.

The Panel was charged with reviewing the spread, actions and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, compile facts, distil lessons and make evidence-based recommendations to ensure countries and global institutions, including WHO, can more effectively address health threats.

The Panel has taken a systematic, rigorous and comprehensive approach to its work and has placed an emphasis on listening and learning from others. Since mid-September, the Panel has conducted numerous literature reviews, its own original research, has learned from dozens of experts in round-table discussions and in-depth interviews, has heard directly from people working on the front line of the pandemic in town-hall style meetings, and has invited contributions from anyone wishing to make one. The Panel has benefited from interactions with the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board, the IHR Review Committee and the Independent Oversight and Advisory Committee. The Panel has met formally six times, and several times in subgroups to discuss specific areas.

The Independent Panel has valued openness and transparency throughout, publishing news summaries and meeting reports shortly after each meeting. The Secretariat has operated in an open-door manner and welcomed conversations with anyone who has wished to speak to it.

At its second meeting on 20–21 October 2020, the Panel established a Program of Work, which includes four interconnected themes: to build on the past by learning from previous epidemics and pandemics, including the extent to which lessons and recommendations from these have been applied; review the present, examining why and how COVID-19 became a global pandemic, including building an authoritative chronology of facts and actions by countries, regional and international actors; understand the impact of COVID-19 on people's health and on health systems, including the role of communication and community resilience and the significant socioeconomic impact; and identify gaps in the international system and recommend changes for the future.

The Program of Work laid out specific questions for review, and the Panel has studied these through:

- **desk reviews** of selected topics to provide background reports to the Panel;
- **semi-structured in-depth interviews** with key actors from national governments, academia, international organizations, including WHO, civil society, health workers and subject-matter experts;
- requests for information to WHO through a repository established by the Panel;