

Concept Note

MEETING OF THE WHO STRATEGIC AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HIV, VIRAL HEPATITIS AND SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STAC-HHS) 21-23 September 2021 13:00-15:30h Geneva time

Virtual Meeting – ZOOM/WHO HQ

Background to STAC-HHS

- In 2016 two committees for HIV and hepatitis were merged to create *the Strategic and Technical Advisory Committee on HIV and Viral Hepatitis (STAC-HIVHEP)*. STAC-HIVHEP met twice with between 45 and 50 members. Members were requested to serve on the combined STAC for three years with the possibility for renewal once and/or at the discretion of WHO.
- STAC-HIVHEP predominantly focused on advising on the content and implementation of Global Health Sector Strategies on HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) for the period 2016-2021 – the strategies were adopted at the 69th session of the World Health Assembly (resolution WHA69.22). The three strategies applied a common universal health coverage framework and highlight the synergies across these disease areas.
- While the STAC-HIVHEP focused predominantly on HIV and hepatitis it also provided an important strategic steer in relation to sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The STI strategy was also considered, alongside the HIV and hepatitis strategies, in the deliberations of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Group of RHR¹/HRP and the RHR-convened and Gender Advisory Panel (GAP).
- In October 2020 STAC-HIVHEP was convened with STI experts also joining as observers. The meeting provided direction to WHO for post 2021 strategies that addressed the ongoing COVID-19 context and encouraged a focus on integration across the disease areas for 2022-2030.
- Many linkages exist across the three responses – many of the populations at greatest risk are the same; modes of transmission are similar; there are common interventions and models of service delivery; and structural barriers, such as access to affordable medicines and addressing stigma and discrimination, are common challenges.
- During the meeting the Director-General noted the strong productive dynamic of the STAC and encouraged members to re-engage in 2021 when WHO would convene a new SATC that would also formally include STIs within its focus.
- This will be the first meeting of the Strategic and Technical Committee on HIV, viral hepatitis, and sexually transmitted infections (STAC-HHS). Members have been selected from a combination of previous STAC-HIVHEP membership and an open call for expressions of interest which was also extended to the STI experts that joined the October 2020 meeting as observers.

¹ Note that RHR is now the WHO Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research (SRH).

Rationale for convening a virtual meeting of the STAC-HHS in September 2021

- Following a request from the 74th World Health Assembly the World Health Organization is now in the process of developing Global Health Sector Strategies for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) for 2022-2030.
- The strategies will be presented to the Executive Board in January 2022 prior to their consideration and hopeful adoption by the 75th World Health Assembly in May 2022.
- Each of the strategies seeks to ensure the epidemics are ended as public health threats by 2030, yet despite considerable progress in some areas of prevention and treatment, in most cases, interim 2020 targets across the strategies were not reached.
- Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the pace of progress in reducing new HIV infections, increasing access to treatment, and ending AIDS-related deaths was slowing. And major advances in hepatitis prevention, testing and treatment were still failing to reach the 290 million people globally unaware they are living with viral hepatitis. And prior to the pandemic more than 1 million sexually transmitted infections (STIs) continued to be acquired every day worldwide with more than 350 000 adverse birth outcomes including 200,000 stillbirths and newborn STI-related deaths occurring annually.
- Each epidemic requires a revised strategic framework and strengthened political commitment to guide the final push to reach the SDG and WHA-adopted. As such the HHS Department is developing 2022-2030 strategies for these areas.
- The Department of Global HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Infections Programmes (HHS) works across all three levels of WHO and has integrated its work across the three disease areas with teams focused on strategic information, access to medicines and diagnostics and addressing prevention and the needs of key populations focused on all three epidemics.
- This first meeting of the newly constituted STAC-HHS would ensure timely and strategic advice in response to the first full draft of the strategies – developed as a result of a robust, yet compressed, May-August consultation period.

Terms of reference of the STAC-HHS

- For the first meeting of the STAC-HHS terms of reference, aligned with recently updated guidance on WHO advisory groups, will be circulated to members.

Membership of STAC-HHS

- Members have been drawn from expressions of interest from previous STAC-HIVHEP members, STI expert observers to the last meeting and a broader pool of expert stakeholders engaged in work across these three areas. A representative from the STAG-TB will be asked to either attend the meeting in observer capacity or join the STAC-HHS as a member. Membership has been selected by WHO to ensure gender, regional and subject matter diversity.

Working with the STAC-HHS Chairs

- The chairs will be asked to shape the final agenda and breakout arrangements for the meeting in September 2021.

Secretariat and observers

- The WHO HHS Department will act as Secretariat to the STAC HHS.
- Regional Offices will be represented by Directors of Communicable Diseases or their equivalent.
- HHS Department and other HQ departments staff will participate as technical resource people or observers in relevant sessions.

- Key partners will be invited to send representatives as observers to the meeting, including UNAIDS, the Global Fund, UNITAID, IARC and the Medicines Patent Pool.

Expected Deliverables

- A full draft of the Global Health Sector Strategies on HIV, viral hepatitis, and sexually transmitted infections for 2022-2030 will be provided as the key input to the meeting.
- A summary of outcomes from virtual regional consultations, an online public consultation, Member States discussions and stakeholder consultations will also be shared.
- A Meeting report will be produced that includes:
 - Summary of major issues discussed
 - Recommendations to the Director-General and to WHO technical units with a focus on the final draft of the strategies

Meeting format and agenda

- The meeting will be held over three afternoons, 21-23 September 2021 to ensure optimal engagement for all time zones (See Annex 1)
- The meeting objectives and agenda will be elaborated further in consultation with the STAC chairs and WHO Regional Offices.

Annex 1: Draft Agenda

21 September 2021, 13:00-15:30

Day One – *The Draft Strategies*

Time	Session	Speakers
13:00-13:20	Welcome and introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening remarks• Introductions• Declarations of interest• Objectives, agenda and process	Ren Minghui Meg Doherty Co-chairs: Margaret Hellard HIV chair STI chair
13:20-13:50	Presentations: Draft 2022-2030 strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none">• HHS Director’s Overview: review of last STAC recommendations; highlights from WHO governing bodies discussions; overview of consultation process and feedback; orientation to structure and content of Global health sector strategies on HIV, hepatitis and STIs (2022-2030); indication of next steps	Meg Doherty
13:50-14:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional perspectives on strategic opportunities to 2030 (including highlights from regional consultations)	WHO regional office presenters
14:50-15:30	Facilitated discussion on draft strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capturing of any overarching STAC recommendations in relation to the draft strategies	Margaret Hellard

22 September 2021: 13:00-15:30

Day Two – *Balancing disease specificity and common approaches*

Time	Session	Speakers
13:00-13:15	Day one recap and orientation to Day 2	
13:15-15:30	BREAK OUT SESSIONS BY DISEASE AREA (HIV, hepatitis, STIs) Facilitated discussion focused on the following questions:	Chairs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has WHO achieved an appropriate balance in promoting integration, synergies and commonalities and driving disease-specific actions and progress? • Do the strategies appropriately consider the disruptions and opportunities afforded by the COVID-19 pandemic? • Does the strategies' accountability framework and sections describing 2025 targets and the approach to a 2026 midterm review allow for course correction should it be required? 	
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23 September 2021: 13:00-15:30

Day Three – STAC-HHS Recommendations

Time	Session	Speakers
13:00-13:30	Report back from break-out sessions	Chairs
13:30-13:45	Next steps in the strategies' development process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHO guidance on advisory bodies • Strategic engagement around the strategies' development process 	WHO
13:45-15:00	STAC recommendations and STAC member feedback and messages	All STAC members
15:00-15:30	Presentation of 2020 STAC recommendations to WHO leadership	Chairs WHO DG/DDG Ren Minghui