

**The Citizens of the Member State  
of New Zealand**  
In the absence of a formed government  
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27 November 2023

World Health Organization  
WHO Headquarters in Geneva  
Avenue Appia 20  
**1211 Geneva**  
**Switzerland**

**BY HAND**

**Attention: Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General, WHO**

Dear Mr Ghebreyesus

**REJECTION OF THE ADOPTED AMENDMENTS TO THE INTERNATIONAL HEALTH REGULATIONS [WHA75.12](#)**

1. In the absence of a formally established coalition government, we, the people of the member state, New Zealand (**We/Us**), reject the adopted amendment to 2005 International Health Regulations [WHA75.12](#) (in toto) pursuant to Article 61, 2005 IHR.
2. WHA75.12 proposes amendments to Article 59 (and consequential amendments to Articles 55, 61, 62 and 63), which would have the effect of reducing the time for:
  - a. rejection of any future amendments to the 2005 IHR from 18 months to 10 months; and
  - b. implementation of future changes into our domestic law from 24 months to 12 months,  
**(WHA75.12).**
3. We state unequivocally that it is necessary to reject WHA75.12 to enable a full, proper and considered examination of any future amendments to the 2005 International Health Regulations, including, for example, the 300+ amendments currently in draft with the IHR Working Group (**300+ Amendments**) for anticipated distribution by you to the member states in January 2024 (in compliance with Article 55, 2005 International Health Regulations and Decision [WHA75\(9\)](#)).

4. The rejection is necessary, as the 10-month period proposed in the WHA75.12 would not allow sufficient time for New Zealand to properly consider the 300 + Amendments or their impact on our domestic legislation and the people of New Zealand. Nor would there be sufficient time to publicly consult on matters for future binding treaty actions.
5. Further, New Zealand's Royal Commission Inquiry into the COVID-19 Pandemic Response would not be finalised.<sup>1</sup> The Commissioners have only opened their inquiry to public input from late November 2023. The New Zealand Government's Terms of Reference provide that the Commissioners are to report by September 2024, well after the likely adoption of the substantial 300+ Amendments at the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly at the end of May 2024.
6. We must advise you of the rejection of the WHA75.12, as New Zealand had an election on 14 October 2023, which saw a change in government from Labour to a National party-led coalition government. The new government is negotiating policy with its likely coalition partners. Under our Mixed Member Proportional voting system, National remains in negotiations with ACT and New Zealand First to form a government. Consequently, New Zealand remains under a caretaker government (under the former government, Labour).
7. It is, therefore, pertinent for Us, on behalf of our nation and the incoming government, to ensure we have the maximum amount of time available to consider such wide-ranging future amendments.

Yours sincerely

*Citizens and Permanent Residents of New Zealand*

**We, the people of the member state of New Zealand**

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<sup>1</sup> NZ COVID-19 Response Royal Commission Order and Terms of Reference require the Commissioners to report by 30 September 2024:  
<https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2022/0323/latest/LMS792965.html>