



Department
for Culture,
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1 December 2025

Lord Hannay of Chiswick
House of Lords
London
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INT2025/11750/DC

Dear Lord Hannay,

World Health Organisation's pandemic convention

I was pleased to be able to speak about the UK government's response to the UK Commission on Covid Commemoration on the floor of the House on 13th November. Thank you for your intervention on the Government's plans for the World Health Organisation's pandemic convention in 2026.

After over three years of negotiations by Member States of the World Health Organisation (WHO), the UK welcomed the adoption of the Pandemic Agreement by the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA) in May.

The Pandemic Agreement should help safeguard lives, livelihoods and economic stability in the UK and globally. It should protect the NHS and the health of our people, and benefit our economy, jobs and growth, as well as our national security. This government has worked hard to secure it. Now that the Agreement has been adopted, an Intergovernmental Working Group (IGWG) has been established to facilitate Member States in negotiating and drafting an Annex to the Pandemic Agreement on a new Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing (PABS) mechanism.

Member States of the WHO have agreed to report on the outcome by the next WHA in May 2026. I have enclosed a copy of the Government's [latest update](#) to Parliament on this matter, provided by Minister Ahmed, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health Innovation and Safety, in October. The Pandemic Agreement will not be open for signature and ratification until the details of the PABS Annex have been negotiated and agreed by Member States and adopted by the WHA. The UK remains fully committed to the process of securing a PABS Annex that is firmly in the UK national interest, and we will continue to engage constructively in the remaining negotiations.



Ensuring the UK is prepared for a future pandemic is a top priority for this Government, and we are embedding lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic within our pandemic preparedness.

I will deposit a copy of this letter in the Libraries of both Houses.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Twycross', written in a cursive style.

Baroness Twycross
Minister for Museums, Heritage and Gambling