



[WHO Members Set Up an Independent Inquiry into the Global Coronavirus Response](#)

World Health Organization (WHO) member states have adopted a resolution to set up an independent inquiry into the global response to the coronavirus pandemic. The resolution was presented by the European Union (EU) on behalf of 100 nations and passed without objection during the WHO's annual assembly meeting, which was held virtually this year due to the ongoing health crisis. It calls for an "impartial, independent, and comprehensive evaluation" of the international response and will also examine both the WHO's timelines relating to the pandemic as well as the source of the virus and the way in which it was introduced to the human population. The coronavirus was first detected in the Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019 and a number of nations, including the United States, have accused authorities there of withholding information during the early stages of the outbreak.

The United States, under the Trump administration, has been particularly critical of the WHO's response to the pandemic. President Trump has labelled the WHO as a "puppet" of China and recently announced that he plans to suspend American funding to the organization. On Monday, he posted a letter on Twitter which warned the WHO that they have 30 days to "commit to major substantive improvements" or the United States would permanently freeze funding and reconsider its membership. Additionally, Trump accused the WHO of ignoring reports regarding the coronavirus spreading in China back in December and failing to share important information regarding the outbreak. U.S. Health Secretary Alex Azar was also critical in his remarks to the assembly, stating "We must be frank about one of the primary reasons this outbreak spun out of control: there was a failure by this organization to obtain the information that the world needed, and that failure cost many lives."

However, the WHO's Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus affirmed the organization's commitment to "transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement" during his address to the virtual summit, and other world leaders have repeatedly highlighted the significance of the WHO's work in fighting the global pandemic. In a statement on Tuesday, the EU said that "This is the time for solidarity, it is not the time for finger pointing or undermining multilateral cooperation." Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez added that "This pandemic has highlighted our vulnerability and made it clear that we need one another and that's why more than ever we must be united." EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell also commended the WHO for its leading role in guiding the response to the coronavirus crisis and reiterated the bloc's call for vaccine research to be shared.

The 73rd session of the World Health Assembly was held virtually this year over two days, as opposed to the usual two weeks, because of the current health crisis. The approved resolution did not immediately adopt a time frame for the investigation, but Ghebreyesus told the assembly that he would welcome an independent evaluation at the "earliest appropriate moment."