

WHO's pandemic treaty

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In news- Members of the World Health Organization (WHO) held the first round of negotiations towards the pandemic treaty aimed at agreeing on ways of working and timelines for a “convention agreement recently.

About the pandemic treaty of WHO-

- **The process for the treaty was started in December 2021** where the World Health Assembly agreed to start a global process to draft the pandemic treaty.
- The need for an updated set of rules was felt after the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the shortcomings of global health systems.
- **The Health Assembly adopted a decision titled “The World Together” at its second special session since it was founded in 1948.**
- Under the decision, the **WHO established an intergovernmental negotiating body (INB) to draft and negotiate the contents of the pandemic treaty** in compliance with Article 19 of the WHO Constitution.
- **Article 19 of the WHO Constitution gives the World Health Assembly the authority to adopt conventions or agreements** on matters of health. A two-third majority is needed to adopt such conventions or agreements.
- For example, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control was set up under Article 19 and it came into force in 2005.
- **The pandemic treaty is expected to cover aspects like data sharing and genome sequencing of emerging viruses and equitable distribution of vaccines** and drugs and related research throughout the world.
- **The European Union (EU) also wants a ban on wildlife**

markets to be included in the treaty.

- A widely-accepted theory points that the novel coronavirus may have jumped from animals to humans in a wildlife market of China.
- While the **EU wants the treaty to be legally binding, the U.S., Brazil and India have expressed reservations about the same.** The legal nature of the treaty is yet to be defined.
- The second meeting for the treaty, where the members are expected to discuss the progress on a working draft, is scheduled to be held by August 1, 2022.
- **INB** will also hold public hearings to inform its deliberations; deliver a progress report to the 76th World Health Assembly in 2023; and **submit its outcome for consideration by the 77th World Health Assembly in 2024.**