



## Public Health Emergency of International Concern

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### Why in News

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The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has recently announced that the **Wuhan coronavirus does not yet constitute a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)**.

- A PHEIC is defined in the **International Health Regulations (IHR, 2005)** as, “an extraordinary event which is determined to constitute a public health risk to other States through the international spread of disease and to potentially require a coordinated international response”. This definition implies a situation that is:
  - Serious, sudden, unusual or unexpected;
  - Carries implications for public health beyond the affected State’s national border; and
  - May require immediate international action.
- The declaration of PHEIC would lead to boosting public health measures, funding and resources to prevent and reduce global spread. It could include recommendations on trade and travel, although the WHO generally tries to avoid disruptive trade restrictions.
- The **Emergency Committee**, made up of international experts, provide technical advice to the WHO Director-General in the context of a PHEIC.
- The WHO has declared five global emergencies in the past decade, including the **Ebola epidemic**.

### The International Health Regulations (2005)

- IHR (2005), represents a **binding international legal agreement** involving 196 countries across the globe, including all the Member States of the WHO.
- Their aim is to help the international community prevent and respond to acute public health risks that have the potential to cross borders and threaten people worldwide.