

Proposal for a supplementary agenda item

1. In accordance with Rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, the Director-General has the honour to refer to the following proposal for a supplementary agenda item to be added to the provisional agenda of the Board at its 136th session.
2. A proposal was received on 14 January 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva, for an additional item for the provisional agenda of the Board to be entitled: “WHO guidelines development and governance”.
3. This proposal is submitted to the Board for its consideration (see Annex).

ANNEX

WHO EB 136

Request for the inclusion of a new item on the agenda of the EB 136, under rule 10 (urgency) of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board

“WHO GUIDELINES DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE”

Background document:

- The WHO Handbook for Guideline Development (http://www.who.int/kms/guidelines_review_committee/en/), currently in use does not foresee any obligation to involve Member States and other stakeholders. This is left to the discretion of the relevant WHO department (public consultations are not even compulsory).
- Regulations and procedures concerning the development of WHO guidelines and policy papers, in particular the Regulations for Expert Advisory Panels and Committees date back several years, sometimes decades : we believe that they should be reviewed and updated in order to take into account a different international commitment by stakeholders, in particular Member States, to make them more reliable by increasing the accountability and transparency of the Organization, while maintaining its independence.
- The Secretariat will be asked to implement Rome’s FAO/WHO Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) conclusions, based on the Conference outcome documents and on the report provided by the Secretariat. This task will involve a large amount of preparatory work, the update or review of policy papers and guidelines and the development of new ones.
- Given the importance of the ICN2 follow-up and implementation and the implications for Member States policies, it is urgent to review the process for the development, update and approval of WHO policy papers, especially guidelines, in order to agree common and shared procedures that should include an adequate involvement of member States in the process, while ensuring at the same time that the Guidelines are based on solid and verifiable scientific evidence.
- The inclusion of this item aims at conveying Member States discussions on envisaging a suitable involvement of member States along the development and decision process.
- The urgency of the issue is connected to the need to implement the ICN2 Outcome Documents and by the release of Document EB136/8 only on December 30, 2014, less than one month before the beginning of the Executive Board and when the agenda had already been circulated.
- A discussion among the Member States should be therefore launched, with a view to reaching shared conclusions in a convenient time for an efficient and adequate update of the WHO Guidelines and policy papers development procedures and governance.
- Obviously, the importance of the discussion on this item calls for preparatory work by the Secretariat. Nevertheless, Member States should have an exploratory discussion at EB136 and a more complete and deep evaluation at the EB following the WHA in May 2015, on the basis of a document prepared by the Secretariat.

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