

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIRST MEETING

**WHO headquarters, Geneva
Monday, 28 May 2018, scheduled at 09:30**

**Chairman: Dr A. HAFEEZ (Pakistan)
later: Ms M. N. FARANI AZEVÊDO (Brazil)**

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FIRST MEETING

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Chairman: Dr A. HAFEEZ (Pakistan)
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1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN, VICE-CHAIRMEN AND RAPPORTEUR: Item 1 of the provisional agenda

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, which set out the procedures for electing Officers of the Board. Following the principle of rotation among WHO regions, Ms Maria Nazareth Farani Azevêdo (Brazil) had been nominated for the office of Chairman of the Executive Board.

Ms Farani Azevêdo (Brazil) was elected Chairman.

Ms Farani Azevêdo took the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN thanked the Board for electing her and paid tribute to her predecessor. Referring to Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure, she said that, following the principle of geographical rotation, and on the basis of consultations in the respective regions, the following nominations had been made for the four Vice-Chairmen: Mr Simon Mfanzile Zwane (Eswatini), Dr Päivi Sillanaukee (Finland), Dr Rajitha Senaratne (Sri Lanka) and Ms Glenys Beauchamp (Australia).

Mr Mfanzile Zwane (Eswatini), Dr Sillanaukee (Finland), Dr Senaratne (Sri Lanka) and Ms Beauchamp (Australia) were elected Vice-Chairmen.

The CHAIRMAN said that, under Rule 15 of the Rules of Procedure, if the Chairman was unable to act between sessions, one of the Vice-Chairmen would act in his or her place; the order in which the Vice-Chairmen would be requested to serve should be determined by lot at the session at which the election had taken place.

It was determined by lot that the Vice-Chairmen would serve in the following order: Dr Sillanaukee (Finland), Mr Mfanzile Zwane (Eswatini), Ms Beauchamp (Australia), Dr Senaratne (Sri Lanka).

The CHAIRMAN said that, pursuant to Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure and in accordance with the principle of rotation among geographical regions, Dr Mohammed Jaber Hwoal Ai-Taae (Iraq) had been nominated Rapporteur.

Dr Hwoal Ai-Taae was elected Rapporteur.

2. OPENING OF THE SESSION AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA: Item 2 of the provisional agenda (documents EB143/1 and EB143/1 (annotated))

The CHAIRMAN declared open the 143rd session of the Executive Board.

In response to two comments from the representative of JAPAN, the CHAIRMAN said that the matter of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 would be taken up during the session and that document EB143/13, on the eleventh revision of the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, was a summarized version of a longer document that was available in the meeting room.

The agenda was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Board should proceed in accordance with Rule 28 of the Rules of Procedure relating to time limits, that it should take up its agenda items in numerical order, and that it should follow the proposed timetable, including the format of an open meeting in accordance with Rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure.

It was so agreed.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL congratulated the Chairman on her election and thanked her predecessor for his work. He underscored WHO's capacity to give hope to those in need of health care and highlighted the key role of hope in the Thirteenth General Programme of Work. The Programme's adoption marked a milestone for WHO and Member States, whom he thanked for their work and support. Poliomyelitis eradication would remain a priority goal, and a smooth polio transition, to which he was committed, would ensure that WHO continued to benefit from the considerable investments that all partners had made.

The Organization had to work as "one WHO". The transformation plan he had agreed with the Regional Directors and Deputy Directors-General to that end included the strengthening of joint management, a new external engagement model to establish a sustainable future for WHO, and the development of an investment case, to show what a fully financed WHO could achieve. As part of efforts to proactively expand the WHO donor base, preparations were under way to establish a WHO Foundation, which would allow funds to be generated from new sources, such as the general public. He thanked Member States that had already committed to supporting WHO with flexible funds and expressed confidence that more countries would follow suit. As a participant in the United Nations reform process at Principal level, he stressed the importance of engagement at regional and country level. The Executive Board and the Health Assembly would be kept fully informed about, and involved in, any challenges that WHO faced in the course of that process.

Turning to governance reform, he thanked the Board for the work accomplished and proposals made and looked forward to its continued leadership on the issue. He proposed that Board members should visit selected countries, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to see first-hand the impact of WHO's work.

In closing, he thanked Dr Shin Young-See, Regional Director for the Western Pacific, for his remarkable service and wished him success for the future.

Organization of work

The representative of ROMANIA, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, recalled that, as agreed in an exchange of letters in 2000 between WHO and the European Commission on the consolidation and intensification of cooperation, and without prejudice to any

future general agreement between WHO and the European Union, the European Union attended sessions of the Board as an observer. He requested that, as at previous sessions, representatives of the European Union should be invited to participate, without vote, in the meetings of the 143rd session of the Board and its committees, subcommittees, drafting groups or other subdivisions that addressed matters falling within the competence of the European Union.

The CHAIRMAN took it that the Board wished to accede to the request.

It was so agreed.

3. OUTCOME OF THE SEVENTY-FIRST WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY: Item 3 of the agenda

The representative of MEXICO said that having fewer items on the Health Assembly agenda had led to more dynamic discussions and comprehensive analysis of issues. In addition, the categorization of progress reports had focused attention on relevant priorities, achievements and challenges. Progress had therefore been made in terms of the implementation of WHO reform, particularly in relation to governance and governing body efficiency.

The representative of BRAZIL applauded the diligent work of the Secretariat and the press team during the Health Assembly but said that there was still room for improvement, particularly in relation to agenda management. Limits on speaking times had allowed the Health Assembly to complete its work on many crucial global health issues on time, but had been challenging for some delegations.

The representative of ALGERIA, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, welcomed the positive changes introduced by the Director-General, such as the “Walk the Talk” event, the opening high-level segment and the organization of physical activities between meetings. Respect for limits on speaking times had allowed for more efficient time management.

The representative of IRAQ said that the Assembly had shown that with amicable collaboration and resolve, nothing was impossible. Thanks to their concerted efforts and well-allocated tasks, Committees A and B had completed their work within the agreed standard time frame, in spite of the heavy agenda. The physical activities organized between meetings in Committee A had also improved efficiency.

The representative of GERMANY, considering the outcome of the Assembly from a governance perspective, stressed the importance of informing Member States as early as possible on the running of the agenda and the potential number of interventions, as sufficient time was needed to adapt statements. He encouraged the continued use of the acoustic signal and welcomed the “Walk the Talk” initiative. Non-State actors had to be included, but it was illogical for their statements to be heard after the debate had ended; fresh consideration should therefore be given to the form of their participation.

The representative of JAPAN, while describing the Health Assembly as a success, said that the two-minute limit on statements at Committee meetings was a challenge for delegations not speaking in their mother tongues. The deliberations could be extended by half a day, in order to allow all delegations to speak. He asked for technical stands to be set up where information could be obtained, including guideline documents.

The representative of SRI LANKA said that the Health Assembly had provided an opportunity to share the insight and experience of health ministers from around the world. Universal health coverage would be achieved by working together with a shared vision to make the planet a healthier place.

4. OTHER MANAGERIAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND GOVERNANCE MATTERS:
Item 4 of the agenda

WHO reform: governance: Item 4.1 of the agenda (documents EB143/2, EB143/2 Add.1, EB143/3 and EB143/4)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the draft decisions in documents EB143/2, EB143/3, and EB143/4. She also drew attention to the outcome of the informal consultations on governance reform, which could be summed up as follows:

7. Possible “low-hanging fruit”, which would not require any changes to the Rules of Procedure include the following:
 - (a) Request the Chairman to use his/her discretion to ensure an effective and efficient discussion, including with respect to the time allotted for statements and the posting of statements on the website.
 - (b) Encourage the Officers of the Board to meet in-person and as needed to carry out their mandate.
 - (c) Develop a more robust methodology for determining the costing implications of proposed resolutions and decisions and devote more time to considering the costing implications during governing body meetings.
 - (d) Encourage WHO to track and share information on gender balance in relation to the officers and presiding officers of governing bodies meetings.
 - (e) Request WHO to establish an internal committee to recommend to the governing bodies end dates for resolutions and decisions with unspecified reporting requirements and streamline resolutions and decisions with multiple reporting requirements.
 - (f) Invite the Secretariat to provide in advance of each session a document listing each agenda item, outlining the corresponding action requested of the Board and proposing how each item will be handled. In relation to this, the Secretariat would also be invited to provide more detail in its reports to the Board regarding the action requested, such as by outlining specific questions or identifying the points on which guidance is requested.
 - (g) Decide that in the future governing body meetings will be paperless, unless documents are ordered in advance. Participants will be invited to access the documents using their mobile devices.

8. With respect to the analysis of the rules of procedure of the governing bodies provided in document EB143/3, and corresponding proposals outlined therein, possible items that the Chairman of the Executive Board may wish to put to the Board to see whether consensus might be reached are the following:

(a) The proposal to allow for the possibility of electronic voting, where appropriate systems are available, on the understanding that provision for electronic voting should in no way be seen as compromising the consensus-based approach usually taken by WHO's governing bodies. (Section C of document EB143/3)

(b) The proposal to amend the rules so as to establish a process for consideration of credentials that relies exclusively on the scanned copy of credentials uploaded onto the Secretariat's online registration system instead of the hard copy originals of credentials. (Section D of document EB143/3)

(c) The proposal to replace gender-specific language with gender-neutral language throughout the rules of procedure, as appropriate to each language version. (Section E of document EB143/3)

(d) The proposal to amend the rules of procedure so as to clarify that only delegates and alternates may be designated to vote in plenary meetings of the WHA, while any member of the delegation may be designated to vote in committee meetings. (Section G of document EB143/3)

(e) The proposal to make provision in the rules of procedure of the governing bodies for a "motion to suspend the debate" on an item under discussion. (Section I of document EB143/3)

(f) The proposal to rename "open" meetings of the Board as "private", to align the terminology with that of the Health Assembly. (Section J of document EB143/3).

The representative of ROMANIA, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, said that the candidate countries Turkey, Montenegro and Serbia, and the potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia, aligned themselves with his statement. Strengthening the strategic role of the Executive Board required better preparation of sessions, efficient session management by chairmen, web-based guidance for delegations, rolling multiyear agenda planning and the use of annotated agendas, with priority given to issues requiring guidance from the Board. It was important to revitalize the distinction and relationship between the governing bodies. Agendas could be shortened in order to focus on the most important issues. A disciplined approach was needed in exercising the right to propose draft resolutions, which should be accompanied by a financial assessment. Instead of limiting the right to speak to Executive Board members, a shorter speaking time could be allotted to Member States not represented on the Board. The equality of official WHO languages must be respected, and the regional economic integration organizations footnote included in the Rules of Procedure.

Some of the proposals emerging from the informal consultations were procedural changes that should be immediately implemented. However, as the Board had not been informed in advance of those changes, further consultations would be required before the relevant draft decision could be adopted. Other proposals clearly required further discussion, and the Chairman should explain how the

Board would proceed in that regard, and for an update on the broader reform process, including on when the transformation plan would be shared with Member States and how it would fit into the process of United Nations reform, to which due consideration should be given.

The duration of the Assembly was established by the Executive Board and should not be changed without consultation. Statements by regional groups took time to prepare and could not be adapted at short notice. Moreover, statements by non-State actors could not be taken fully into consideration, and another way should be found for those actors to contribute.

The representative of the UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, said that documents EB143/2 and EB143/3 were interrelated and therefore had to be discussed together; the decision contained in one document could not be adopted without linking it to the decision contained in the other. He supported the proposal for a two-minute limit for statements by Member States not represented on the Board, whom he encouraged to participate in consultative meetings of their respective regions. He also supported the proposal to introduce mandatory explanatory memoranda for items proposed for direct inclusion on the provisional agenda of the Health Assembly under Rule 5 of its Rules of Procedure, but said that the final decision to include, defer or reject new agenda items should not lie with the Executive Board; under the WHO Constitution, all Member States were entitled to propose agenda items.

Governance reform proposals that did not require changes to the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board could be discussed during the current session, but others required further consultation. He expressed support for the application, on a trial basis, of the prioritization tool proposed in document EB143/4 and suggested that the regional coordinators be included in the process.

The representative of BAHRAIN said that only members of the Board should be allowed to speak during meetings; they should coordinate with non-member representatives in their region so that the views of Member States not represented on the Board were also expressed. Thus redefining speakers' roles would distinguish the work of the Board from that of the Health Assembly. Referring to document EB143/2, she expressed support for the draft decision and said that she agreed with the proposals to change the deadline for submission of draft resolutions and decisions to two weeks before the beginning of each session; promote the participation of women in governing body meetings; focus on matters of strategic priority; make greater use of the website and produce fewer paper documents; and identify the points on which Member State guidance was requested in Secretariat reports.

The representative of FINLAND said that, although Member States could certainly take steps to improve governance, the Secretariat must also contribute by guiding the discussion and giving Member States more time to prepare, which would also allow them to put together more group statements. Common-sense improvements could be made without resorting to an expert group. For example, the experience and best practices of the regional committees could be applied at the global level. Although the slow pace of governance reform was disappointing, the process must be handled by the governing bodies themselves, not an expert group.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA agreed that the Board's advisory role should be enhanced and its effectiveness and efficiency improved, but said that those objectives would not be achieved by limiting the input of Member States not represented on the Board. Although regional statements were valuable, geographical proximity did not guarantee similar viewpoints; all Member States must be permitted to represent their own interests. He also agreed on the need for more accurate and timely information about the financial implications of draft resolutions; efficient collection and sharing of information about gender balance; and improving agenda management by sunseting resolutions and decisions with unspecified reporting requirements. An enhanced role for the Officers of the Board merited further discussion, but questions remained as to how the costs of

additional meetings would be borne. Delegations to additional meetings should be considered a sounding board for the Secretariat rather than representatives of their respective governments. He opposed establishing a new formal, intergovernmental procedure for governance reform and instead favoured an informal, consultative process on any issues that could not be agreed at meetings of the Board itself. He supported the proposal to change the deadline for submitting draft resolutions and decisions.

The representative of JAMAICA said that the Board benefitted from hearing the viewpoints of non-members; while regional group statements had merit, they should not be privileged to the detriment of interventions by individual States. One possible solution was to reduce the speaking time for Member States not represented on the Board, which might result in more targeted interventions. More could be achieved in terms of agenda management, sunseting resolutions, management of meetings by the Chairman, and guidance as to the issues on which Member States should provide input. The proposals relating to the structure and length of the agenda, an enhanced role for the Officers of the Board and clearer financial implications of draft resolutions and decisions merited more thought. However, all reforms must reflect a careful balance between expediency and the principles of transparency, multilateralism and inclusiveness. She supported the draft decisions contained in documents EB143/2, EB143/3 and EB143/4.

The representative of AUSTRALIA said that effective governance reform would require changes, not only to the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, but also in Member State behaviour during meetings. Referring to document EB143/2, she said that further consultations were needed on the draft decision, centred on refocusing the Board on its intended role, setting manageable agendas, strengthening strategic decision-making, and exploring ways of differentiating the participation of members and non-members, starting with speaking-time limits. An expert group might add value in terms of the more complex strategic components of governance reform, so long as it reported to Member States via the Board. Measures that could be adopted without the need for a formal decision should be implemented immediately, especially those related to streamlining session management, but more clarity would be welcome regarding proposed changes to the role of the Officers, in particular the cost of additional face-to-face meetings.

Referring to document EB143/3 and the requirement for explanatory memoranda, she supported option (a), which better empowered the Board and was more in keeping with its intended role. As for the rest of the proposals set forth in the document, she supported making progress on those that had garnered general consensus in informal consultations, namely: electronic voting and credentials, better reflection of gender equity, deadlines for submitting draft resolutions and decisions, clarification of entitlement to vote, introduction of a motion to suspend the debate, and clarification of meeting terminology. Member States must be consulted on submission deadlines as broadly as possible during the January meetings of the Board and intersessional consultations, and she urged the Secretariat to be flexible in some circumstances, such as when documents on agenda items were published late. She supported continued use of the tool for the prioritization of proposals for additional items on the provisional agenda of the Board, to ensure transparency, ongoing improvement and efficiency in the Board's work.

The representative of IRAQ said that Member States not represented on the Board should consult with members from their region ahead of meetings to ensure efficient, prepared interventions. The agenda must be published early enough to allow for more pertinent modifications and be focused on priority items, especially those requiring renewal. Publishing documents electronically, with mechanisms for considering feedback, would streamline that process. More work was needed on equal gender representation. There must be effective and sustainable communication between Board members between sessions, to enable more effective and immediate feedback. The Health Assembly and the Executive Board should be harmonized in terms of preparation, execution and outcomes.

The representative of GERMANY said that governance reform should focus on whether or not the Board effectively provided oversight and guidance to the Secretariat, and in that regard there was room for improvement. Some important issues did not even appear on the Board's agenda, and for those that did, it was often unclear which specific aspects required Member State guidance, making it difficult for the Chairman to steer the discussion. He expressed dismay at the length of the reform process, and suggested that measures that did not require changes to the Rules of Procedure be implemented at the discretion of the Secretariat and the Chairman without waiting for the recommendations of an expert group. The Board could not function effectively if its members only met twice a year to give prepared statements; there was a need to build trust among members during informal meetings, ideally outside Geneva so that representatives could get a better idea of WHO's work on the ground. He therefore supported the Director-General's proposal for country visits.

The representative of MEXICO expressed support for the draft decision contained in document EB143/2. The expert group on governance matters thus established should be intergovernmental, Member States should have a say in the choice of its members, and its work should be inclusive, open and transparent. She was glad that the experts would be selected based on the principle of equal representation in terms of geographical origin and gender and represent different approaches, practical experiences and backgrounds. Taking note of the financial implications, she enquired as to how many experts there would be. Referring to the proposals set out in document EB143/3, she expressed support for switching to electronic voting, so long as the system was operated in compliance with a clear regulatory framework and had proper security measures, access codes to avoid the possibility of duplicate votes, and protocols in case of technical problems. She supported the draft decisions contained in documents EB143/3 and EB143/4.

The representative of CHILE, referring to document EB143/2, supported the proposals to limit the time and number of oral statements by non-members, to hold more frequent meetings of the Officers of the Board, and to develop a more robust methodology for determining the cost implications of draft resolutions and decisions, with the possibility of stricter deadlines that could only be modified in exceptional circumstances. Expressing concern about the growing number of agenda items and reports, he agreed that a system was needed to determine which decisions would be submitted to the Board according to their end date and any unspecified requirements. He also agreed with the proposals relating to paperless meetings, efforts to promote the participation of women in governing body meetings and consultation of Member States as part of governance reform.

The representative of BRAZIL, referring to document EB143/2, expressed support for proposals to promote the participation of women in governing body meetings, move toward paperless meetings and empower the Chairman of the Board to stimulate efficient and effective discussions. Other proposals required more discussion and careful consideration, in particular those to enhance the role of the Officers of the Board; to change the deadline for submitting draft decisions and resolutions and revise the procedure for determining cost implications (any changes should not hinder Member States' ability to address issues relevant to global health); and to sunset resolutions and decisions, in terms of how that might affect mandates and agreed language.

Turning to document EB143/3 and proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure, he noted that there appeared to be near consensus on gender-neutral language and electronic voting and credentials, among others. He preferred option (b) regarding the role of the Board in setting the agenda for the Health Assembly, but more discussion was needed. Allowing written statements might raise issues related to the right to reply, and the proposed changes in language policy for summary and verbatim records were not in accord with the principle of multilingualism.

Lastly, although he welcomed the transparency and simplified criteria presented in the report contained in document EB143/4, he cautioned against focusing solely or primarily on cost-related criteria when setting the Board's agenda; equity and development criteria were also needed.

The representative of ISRAEL said that he generally supported the draft decision contained in document EB143/2 and that it was essential immediately to implement proposals that did not require changes to the Rules of Procedure, in particular speaking-time limits of three minutes for Board members and two minutes for non-members and sunset clauses for resolutions and decisions without clear reporting requirements. Expanding the role of the Officers, however, hinged on more fundamental issues of the Board's relationship to the Health Assembly and should therefore be discussed separately.

The representative of COLOMBIA expressed support for the draft decision set out in document EB143/2, but said that more detail was needed regarding the costs of the expert group that would thus be established, including the cost of meetings and other expenses. More clarity was also needed on the criteria for choosing the group's members. The draft decision stated that members would be chosen in accordance with the WHO Regulations for Study and Scientific Groups, Collaborating Institutions and Other Mechanisms of Collaboration, which stated that the Director-General had authority to determine the membership of such groups. He asked whether Member States would be able to put forward their own candidates. The group's mandate, as set forth in the draft decision, was too ambitious: a timeframe and a clear set of issues for it to examine should be defined. Virtual platforms should be used to facilitate its discussions, so as to optimize resources.

The representative of SUDAN said that some members had been speaking as if they were representing their governments. However, his understanding was that Board members were technical experts who represented the entire Organization, not individual countries. Meetings and discussions of the Board should be limited to members; other mechanisms could be developed for non-members to participate ahead of the session.

The representative of ALGERIA, referring to document EB143/2, expressed support for the following proposals: to reduce the amount of time allotted for statements by Member States not represented on the Board and publish longer versions of their statements online; to promote the participation of women in governing body meetings, without publishing the list of countries concerned; to have recourse, whenever necessary, to publish a document on how agenda items should be handled prior to sessions of the Board; to limit the number of pages of Secretariat reports; to facilitate management of the session by the Chairman; and to hold paperless meetings, with the possibility to order paper copies in advance and to use recycled paper. With regard to the establishment of an expert group to evaluate the proposals, he would welcome an open and inclusive intergovernmental process. The period of planning for the Executive Board sessions in January and May should also be discussed as part of WHO reform. The remaining sections of the document required further discussion.

The representative of CHINA, referring to the requirement of explanatory memoranda for items proposed for inclusion on the agenda of the Health Assembly (document EB143/3), said that option (b) better reflected the advisory nature of the Board as set forth in the WHO Constitution. She agreed with previous speakers that Member States not represented on the Board should continue to be allowed to speak, in the spirit of inclusiveness. Likewise, the practice of only including oral statements in the official record should be retained; written statements published on the website should not refer to other Member States or constitute part of the official record. She welcomed the proposals to change the deadline for submitting draft resolutions and decisions to two weeks before the beginning of each session and to sunset resolutions with no fixed end date for reporting requirements. Caution and a thorough feasibility study should precede the establishment of any expert group. She called for greater flexibility in how Member States participated in the Board's work, so as to foster deeper understanding of the work at hand and improve communication and the quality of discussions.

The representative of DJIBOUTI expressed concern at the number of topics addressed during the Board's current session and the time allotted to them; the discussion should be limited to essential issues, which should be identified by the Secretariat and allocated additional time. He also called for better geographical representation among experts and directors.

The representative of TURKEY endorsed the statement of the representative of China relating to the inclusion of written statements in the official record and opposed any reduction in the length of interventions. A place and time should be set aside for non-State actors, for example in an additional committee.

The representative of JAPAN, referring to document EB143/2, advised against restricting the participation of Member States in the Executive Board, as attempts to save time would have implications on the Health Assembly; those that were not represented on the Board should therefore be allocated additional time. He agreed with the representative of Sudan that Board members should remember that they were not representatives of their governments but public health specialists, and with the representative of Germany on the need to move forward, but with due caution. He expressed concern about the reporting line in the draft decision.

The representative of BURUNDI said that Member States represented on the Board should be given sufficient time to express their views and that the time allotted to Member States not represented on the Board should be reduced. A different forum was required for non-State actors, one which ensured that their views reached the governing bodies.

The representative of CHILE, referring to the requirement for explanatory memoranda for additional items in the provisional agenda of the Health Assembly (document EB143/3), said that the principle of transparency dictated that all Members should be informed of a Board decision to include, defer or exclude the proposed items. Expressing concern about the lack of interaction between Member States, he said that written statements should not restrict the right of delegations to deliver oral interventions; consideration should also be given to the right of reply to written statements. Although electronic voting represented an important development in the decision-making process, there should be a method for determining which decisions could be made electronically and which required the interaction of members. He welcomed the proposal for better reflection of gender equity in the language of the Rules of Procedure, for clearer terminology to describe public and private meetings of the Board, and for clarification of the voting rights of delegates, alternates and advisers attending the Health Assembly. He noted that time limits for submitting resolutions and decisions required further analysis, and expressed support for the alignment of the Rules of Procedure with the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors.

The representative of VIET NAM expressed support for the proposals to reduce the speaking time for Member States not represented on the Board and to develop clearer and more timely information about the costing implications of draft resolutions and decisions, for more informed decision-making. The election of a woman to chair the current Board session had helped to promote the participation of women in governing body meetings. With regard to the requirement for explanatory memoranda set out in document EB143/3, she expressed support for option (a).

The representative of GABON endorsed the proposal to limit the length of interventions by Member States not represented on the Board; he attributed the success of the Seventy-first World Health Assembly to the well-prepared agenda, not to the use of time limits. The agenda should comprise only strategic items; other topics should be discussed in a different context. He emphasized the need to respect multilingualism and expressed support for strengthening the participation of

women in meetings of the Executive Board through equitable representation and the correct use of terminology.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, referring to document EB143/3, expressed support for option (a) on the requirement for explanatory memoranda. The Executive Board had previously considered almost every resolution and decision and he would welcome a return to that practice. He agreed with previous speakers that additional time should be allocated to priority topics, that written statements, if published online, should not be considered part of the official record, and that greater efforts should be made to take account of the views of non-State actors.

The CHAIRMAN said that the importance of agenda items was a subjective and political issue. One possibility would be to consider some items for decision and others for information, with different timelines and procedures followed accordingly.

The representative of FIJI pointed out that some representatives had travelled great distances to deliver statements prepared in advance; it was unfair to reduce the time allotted for their interventions. He suggested that the content of statements could be improved and that time limits could be shared prior to meetings, and expressed support for the proposal to establish an expert group on governance.

The representative of FINLAND, expressing support for the proposed changes to the Rules of Procedure, emphasized the need to make progress on governance reform and improvements to working methods. The statements delivered by representatives were usually carefully prepared and negotiated; she would therefore welcome advance warning of adjustments to speaking times so that any changes to statements could be planned. The wider implications of resolutions and decisions should be analysed from the point of view of staffing as well as financing. There should be flexibility and a transition period for the move to paperless meetings. She agreed that a trial should be conducted of the proposed tool for prioritization of agenda items for the Executive Board, but suggested that further consideration be given to the concept of a rolling agenda. She also expressed support for proposals for greater interaction between Board members and welcomed the Director-General's proposal for country visits.

The representative of MONACO¹ highlighted the decision-making role of the Executive Board under the WHO Constitution. Board members should work together to prepare the Health Assembly, but they should also remember that they were not regional representatives. Referring to document EB143/2, she said that informal consultations should be held with a view to implementing a number of proposals as soon as possible. Intersessional work was a possibility but would come at a cost. She expressed support for the sunseting of resolutions, but opposed the establishment of an expert group that reported directly to the Director-General; it should report to the Executive Board and Member States instead. Referring to document EB143/3, she also opposed the Secretariat's proposal to amend Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board to formalize the practice of preparing summary records in English only, owing to the principle of multilingualism.

The representative of SWITZERLAND¹ said that governance reform efforts still lacked a clear strategic vision. The Executive Board played an essential role in preparing the Health Assembly and building consensus. Emphasizing the need for a transparent, democratic and inclusive process, she expressed support for the establishment of an expert group, provided that Member States were informed of progress in the discussions and that the experts were selected on the basis of their

¹ Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

governance expertise. The group should consider suggestions from Member States and conduct a comparative analysis of different United Nations agencies. She reminded the Secretariat of its responsibility for the effectiveness of governing body discussions, including the publication of its reports in advance.

The representative of PERU¹ said that, although he opposed the proposal to permit only Board members to take the floor, which could have a negative impact on the Health Assembly's work, different time limits could be introduced for members and non-members, and a clock used to indicate remaining time more accurately. Priority could also be given to items involving the adoption of a decision or a recommendation. Any recommendations made by the proposed expert group, or in the final report of a working group in which all Member States could participate, should be channelled through the Organization's governing bodies.

The representative of ALGERIA, referring to document EB143/3, agreed to voting by electronic means where appropriate systems were not only available, but also secured, and that a distinction should be made in the case of elections of the Director-General. He also agreed with the proposals relating to entitlement to vote of delegates, alternates and advisers, although he did not see the clear added value of the proposed amendment to the Rules of Procedure; to the introduction of a motion to suspend the debate; to clarification of terminology regarding public and private meetings of the Board; and to the alignment of the Rules of Procedure of the governing bodies with the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors. All other proposals required further discussion and consultation at the national, regional and global levels of the Organization.

The representative of THAILAND,¹ referring to document EB143/2, said that the proposal to limit the role of Member States not represented on the Board required further discussion, and therefore supported the establishment of an expert group given the terms of reference set out in the draft decision. With reference to document EB143/3, she expressed support for option (a) relating to the requirement for explanatory memoranda, and for the inclusion of written statements submitted by Member States in the official record; such statements should be limited to 350 words. The remaining proposals made in the document were measures that could be implemented immediately. Turning to document EB143/4, she welcomed the proposed amended prioritization tool and expressed support for the relevant draft decision.

The representative from the REPUBLIC OF KOREA¹ expressed support for the establishment of an expert group and for the draft decision set out in document EB143/3, in particular with regard to gender-specific language.

The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND¹ said that she did not support the proposal that only members of the Board should be able to speak in Board meetings; instead, more should be done to improve preparations for meetings. Her Government was open to further discussion of an enhanced role for the Officers of the Board, but required greater clarity on what that would entail and assurances that any changes would be supported appropriately. It agreed that a more robust methodology was needed for determining the cost implications of draft resolutions and decisions, and that the relevant information had to be provided in good time. Its broad agreement with the proposals to streamline management of sessions contained in document EB143/2 did not preclude the need for further deliberations regarding use of the website. An expert group might help generate ideas for consideration by Member States, but more detail was

¹ Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

needed on the Director-General's plans before its establishment was agreed. She expressed support for the draft decisions contained in documents EB143/3 and EB143/4, and for option (a) relating to the requirement for explanatory memoranda.

The representative of NORWAY said that governance reform applied to both the Board and the Health Assembly, which were closely connected. He highlighted the primary role of Member States in that endeavour and called for full transparency about relevant changes. Reducing the speaking time of Member States not represented on the Board was a good way to balance the need for efficient proceedings against the right of all Member States to express their views. Referring to the outcome of the information consultations, he said that most of the actions could be implemented, but that the role of the Officers of the Board and how to limit the number of agenda items in governing body meetings required further discussion. He was opposed to the establishment of an intergovernmental process on governance reform.

The representative of CANADA¹ said that the role of the Officers of the Board required further discussion as soon as possible, in light of their meeting in July 2018 and of the costly and burdensome shift to in-person meetings and the requirement for new mechanisms if the Officers were to serve as regional representatives. The Board should strive for efficiency and effectiveness, but should remain as inclusive and transparent as possible, even if sessions took longer. She agreed with previous speakers on the need to discuss how WHO governing bodies could take the views of non-State actors into account and to allot more time to discussion of strategic priorities. Document EB143/2 contained numerous complex proposals that required further consideration and discussion among Member States. She expressed support for the draft decision calling for the establishment of an expert group, but said that final decisions should continue to fall to the Member States. With respect to document EB143/3 and the explanatory memoranda, she expressed support for option (a).

The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, expressing support for the proposals made by the Secretariat, said that governance reform needed to ensure the inviolability of the rights of Member States and multilingualism. He endorsed the proposal made by the representative of Monaco, particularly as it related to the rights of Member States not represented on the Board. The other proposals required further discussion.

The representative of URUGUAY,¹ referring to document EB143/3, expressed support for option (a) relating to the requirement for explanatory memoranda, but said that the practice introduced in other organizations of publishing written statements on the website should not replace oral statements. Her Government was reluctant to change the deadline for submitting draft resolutions and decisions, particularly resolutions with budgetary implications requiring last-minute negotiations, and to align the Rules of Procedure with the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors without further discussion. Turning to document EB143/2, she said that governance issues were for all Member States to deliberate. Rather than establish the limited expert group called for in the draft decision, the open-ended consultations should be pursued. Making a distinction between Member States represented or not represented on the Board in terms of their basic right to take the floor and the speaking time allotted to them would restrict democratic participation in the governing bodies and have a negative impact on the work of the Organization. Other ideas could be explored to ensure that discussions were more focused, such as discussing substantive issues in both annual Board sessions and moving the second meeting to the second half of the year. Given that members of the Board did not represent their regions, Member States had to retain the possibility to present their views.

¹ Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

The representative of the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC¹ said that she was not opposed to the establishment of an expert group, but asked for further information regarding the number of members, the cost and respect for the principles of equitable geographical representation and gender balance. She also requested further information about the distinction that would be made between Member States represented on the Board, Member States not represented on the Board and non-State actors in terms of their right to participate. During her country's membership of the Board, she had benefited from the views expressed by all non-members. Rather than limiting speaking times, it might be preferable to provide documents on time and in the official languages, and to limit the agenda to priority items. Calling on Member States to suit their actions to their words on the issues of gender balance in governing bodies and paperless documentation, she said that her country would appreciate further discussion and information on governance issues requiring amendments to the Rules of Procedure.

The representative of NEW ZEALAND¹ expressed strong support for the implementation of measures that did not require a formal decision and for the creation of a clear, wider process for further review of governance, with the outcomes being brought to the attention of the governing bodies for consideration and decision. He expressed support for the establishment of an expert group to conduct the review in consultation with Member States; the group should meet virtually, irrespective of available funds. He shared the concern of previous speakers about the role of the Officers of the Board and the need for them to meet in person, given the financial implications. Outlining his reservations about the prioritization tool and its approach to risk weighting, he said that he would rather see the prioritization mechanism open to all members of the Board to vote on between sessions via a secured application, rather than being limited to a subset of Member States. He agreed on the need to sunset resolutions and decisions with unspecific reporting requirements and to streamline those with multiple reporting requirements, with outcomes being brought back to the governing bodies for discussion and agreement, and on the need for clarity on specific aspects requiring Member State guidance. Dividing agenda items into those requiring a decision and those that were for information would be one simple step in that direction.

The representative of SPAIN¹ said that the proposed amendment to Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board and the proposed language for a new rule (72bis) to the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly were both inconsistent with the principle of equality between working languages.

The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN¹ said that the introduction of amendments should not be to the detriment of non-members of the Board and the governing bodies. Any reform process should be transparent, open, inclusive and democratic. The expert group should be an inclusive, intergovernmental and member-driven initiative that would allow all Member States to express their views; any outcomes should be submitted to the governing bodies for final decision. Referring to document EB143/2, he said that more time was required for Member States to deliberate the many proposals it contained and achieve an all-inclusive solution.

The representative of PANAMA¹ agreed with previous speakers that the Rules of Procedure should not be amended so that only members of the Board could take the floor. Member States not represented on the Board were entitled to express their views on issues of interest to them and regional coordination was not a function of the members of the Board. On the issue of face-to-face meetings between the Director-General and the Officers of the Board, she asked the Secretariat to provide an estimate of the consequent increase in spending and how it would be financed. She expressed support

¹ Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

for the following proposals: to develop a more robust method for determining the financial implications of resolutions and decisions; to change the deadline for submitting resolutions and decisions; to promote the participation of women in governing body meetings; to produce a document on how each item of the agenda would be handled, along the lines of what was being done by the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control; and to hold paperless meetings. She endorsed the suggestion that a digital clock be used to time interventions.

The CHAIRMAN, having listened carefully to all points of view, proposed that a paper be prepared dividing the various proposals into three categories: those that could be implemented immediately; those that required clarification but might be decided at the current session of the Board; and those that required further discussion. The paper would be submitted to the members of the Board at the current session for approval and for a decision on the way forward.

It was so agreed.

The meeting rose at 12:25.

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