

WHO governance reform processes

Written statements for the Executive Board and Health Assembly: guidelines for Member States

Report by the Director-General

1. At its 144th session in January 2019, the Executive Board in decision EB144(3) requested the Director-General to submit to the Executive Board at its 145th session in May 2019 draft guidelines for Member States to be applied before posting written statements on the dedicated website.¹
2. Accordingly, the Secretariat has developed draft guidelines for the Board's consideration. It is proposed that such guidelines should appear on the dedicated WHO webpage hosting written statements submitted by Member States.

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

3. The Board is invited to consider the draft guidelines contained in the Annex to this report and to provide further guidance on this matter, in particular:
 - (a) whether further aspects relating to written statements for posting on the dedicated webpage should be addressed in the guidelines and, if so, which aspects; and
 - (b) subject to any further guidance that may be provided on point (a), whether the Board agrees that the proposed guidelines should be published on the dedicated webpage to serve as guidance to Member States wishing to post written statements, with effect from the closure of the 145th session of the Board.

¹ Decision EB144(3), paragraph 5(c).

ANNEX

GUIDELINES FOR WRITTEN STATEMENTS RELATING TO MEETINGS OF THE WHO GOVERNING BODIES TO BE POSTED ON THE DEDICATED WHO WEBPAGE

The following guidelines apply to written statements by Member States relating to meetings of the World Health Assembly and Executive Board to be posted on the dedicated WHO webpage.

1. Member States may submit written statements by sending them to the following email address: statements@who.int.
2. Written statements may be submitted until the closure of the relevant session of the Health Assembly or Executive Board. Statements submitted after closure of the session will not be accepted.
3. Written statements submitted by a Member State may not exceed 500 words each. Written statements submitted on behalf of a region or group of countries may not exceed 550 words.
4. Each statement should clearly identify:
 - (a) the Member State submitting the statement or, in the event of regional statements, the region or group of countries on behalf of which the statement is submitted; and
 - (b) the governing body session and specific agenda item to which the statement relates.
5. Written statements should contain text only. No photographs, diagrams, maps and/or other media materials may be included.
6. Written statements may be provided in any of the six WHO official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish) and are published as submitted by the Member State. Member States may provide unofficial translations of their written statements, if they so wish.
7. Written statements are made available for information purposes. They are intended to stimulate debate and to enable delegations to complement their oral interventions during the meetings of the WHO governing bodies. For example, they may expand upon the information provided by the Member State concerned during the discussion and/or may describe country experiences relevant to the agenda item concerned.
8. Member States assume full responsibility for the content of their statements. Written statements should address the agenda item in respect of which they are submitted and must avoid unrelated politically controversial subject matter. They must not include any offensive language, including with respect to other Member States.
9. The opportunity to post written statements on the dedicated webpage is without prejudice to the content of Member States' oral interventions during the meetings of the WHO governing bodies.
10. Written statements do not replace or supplement the official records of the relevant meetings of the WHO governing bodies and do not constitute official WHO documents. The official records of meetings of the WHO governing bodies constitute the exclusive authoritative record of proceedings.

11. Any Member State may exercise a right of reply in writing to a written statement posted on the dedicated webpage. Member States wishing to exercise such right should:

- (a) submit their statement of reply as soon as possible after the statement to which they wish to reply has been posted and, in any case, no later than two working days after the closure of the relevant WHO governing body session;
- (b) clearly indicate that their statement is a statement of reply;
- (c) ensure that any such statement is as brief as possible and, in any case, does not exceed the general word limit set out under paragraph 3 above.

Notwithstanding the above, the provisions relating to the right of reply as set out in the rules of procedure of the Health Assembly and Executive Board do not extend to written statements posted on the dedicated webpage.

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