

Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response

Terms of membership

Report by the Director-General

1. The terms of reference of the Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (“the Standing Committee”) provide that the 14 members of the Standing Committee (12 appointed members, comprising two members from each WHO region selected from among Executive Board members; and two ex officio members, namely the Chair and a Vice-Chair of the Executive Board) shall serve for two years and that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee, who shall be appointed from among its members, shall serve for a one-year term.¹ These terms apply as long as the Standing Committee members remain members of the Executive Board.
2. The first 12 appointed members of the Standing Committee were appointed by the Executive Board under a written silence procedure, with effect from 5 December 2022. Accordingly, their two-year terms will expire on 4 December 2024, except for those Standing Committee members who will cease to be members of the Executive Board sooner. Similarly, the one-year terms of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee will expire on 4 December 2023.
3. At its first meeting, held on 12 December 2022, the Standing Committee discussed the misalignment between the terms of its membership and the normal schedule of WHO committee membership, which is usually aligned with the Health Assembly’s annual schedule (i.e. May to May rather than December to December). The Standing Committee recommended that the Executive Board consider this matter at its next meeting.²
4. The Executive Board may wish to consider the three options for addressing this misalignment that are set out in paragraphs 5 to 10 below.

Option 1

5. The Executive Board may wish to extend the two-year terms of the three members of the Standing Committee whose terms would otherwise expire in December 2024 until the closure of the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly in May 2025. The terms of the other nine appointed Standing Committee members will automatically expire when they cease to be members of the Board in May 2023 (two members) and in May 2024 (seven members). The Board may also wish to extend the

¹ Decision EB151(2) (2021), Annex, paragraphs 1 and 2.

² Document EB/SCHEPPR/1/3, paragraph 5.

one-year terms of the first/current Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee, which would otherwise expire on 4 December 2023, until the closure of the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly in May 2024.

6. This option would align the terms of the 12 appointed members of the Standing Committee with those of the members of the Board. It would also ultimately result in a well-balanced staggered membership. The two seats held by members of the Board whose Board terms expire in May 2023 would be filled by members whose two-year Standing Committee terms would end in May 2025. Thus, seven seats would become vacant in May 2024 and five seats would become vacant in May 2025. Thereafter, seven vacant seats and five vacant seats would be filled in alternate years. This would ensure a balance between continuity and the regular rotation of membership among Member States.

Option 2

7. The Executive Board may wish to shorten the two-year terms of the three members of the Standing Committee whose terms would otherwise expire in December 2024 so that they expire at the closure of the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly in May 2024. The terms of the other nine appointed Standing Committee members will automatically expire when they cease to be members of the Board in May 2023 (two members) and in May 2024 (seven members). The Board may also wish to shorten the one-year terms of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee, which would otherwise expire on 4 December 2023, so that they expire at the closure of the Seventy-sixth World Health Assembly in May 2023.

8. This option would lead to a much less staggered membership, as two seats would become vacant in May 2023 and ten seats would become vacant in May 2024, so that thereafter two vacant seats and 10 vacant seats would be filled in alternate years.

Option 3

9. The Executive Board may wish to take no action. In this case, the terms of two members will expire in May 2023 (when they cease to be members of the Board); the terms of seven members will expire in May 2024 (when they cease to be members of the Board); the terms of three members will expire in December 2024 (upon completion of their two-year terms); and the terms of the Chair and Vice-Chair will expire in December 2023 (upon completion of their one-year terms).

10. This option would not, however, fully align the terms of the members of the Standing Committee with those of the members of the Board.

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

11. The Board is invited to note the report and to select one of the three options concerning the terms of membership of the Standing Committee that are set out in paragraphs 5 to 10 above. Should the Board wish to select option 1 or 2, it should adopt the decision below, under the option selected. Should the Board not wish to address this issue (option 3), no action is required.

The Executive Board, having considered the report of the Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response on its first meeting¹ and the report of the Director-General on the terms of membership of the Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response,²

[Option 1]

Decided:

1. to extend the current terms of the three members of the Standing Committee whose terms would otherwise expire in December 2024 until the closure of the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly (2025);
2. to extend the current terms of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee, whose terms would otherwise expire on 4 December 2023, until the closure of the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly (2024); and
3. that the current terms of the other members of the Standing Committee and the subsequent terms of all its members will continue as provided in its terms of reference as contained in decision EB151(2) (2022).

[Option 2]

Decided:

1. to shorten the current terms of the three members of the Standing Committee whose terms would otherwise expire in December 2024 so that they expire at the closure of the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly (2024);
2. to shorten the current terms of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee so that they expire at the closure of the Seventy-sixth World Health Assembly (2023); and
3. that the current terms of the other members of the Standing Committee and the subsequent terms of all its members will continue as provided in the terms of reference contained in decision EB151(2) (2022).

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¹ Document EB152/45.

² Document EB152/54.