

## Improved decision-making by the governing bodies

### Report by the Secretariat

1. At its 134th session, the Executive Board considered two reports by the Secretariat on options for improved decision-making by the governing bodies, and adopted decision EB134(3), which included four recommendations to the Health Assembly.<sup>1</sup>

#### RECOMMENDATION 1. WEBCASTING

2. At its 132nd session, the Executive Board discussed several reports on improving the work of the governing bodies and, in decision EB132(15), requested the Director-General among other things to improve electronic access to governing body meetings and documentation on a registered basis.

3. In one of the reports on options for improved decision-making by the governing bodies submitted to the Board at its 134th session by the Secretariat in response, it was recalled that electronic access to governing body meetings had been improved through live webcasting of the meetings of the Board's Programme, Budget and Administration Committee on a registered basis since May 2013.<sup>2</sup> The Secretariat proposed to introduce live webcasting of future meetings of the Committee and sessions of the Executive Board and reported that it was exploring possibilities at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, for webcasting the plenary sessions of the Health Assembly and the meetings of Committees A and B.

4. In decision EB134(3), the Board recommended that the Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly decide to introduce webcasting of future public meetings of its committees A and B, as well as of its plenary meetings, to all Internet users through a link on the WHO website, subject to resolution of any relevant technical issues and the availability of financial resources.

#### RECOMMENDATION 2. ELECTRONIC VOTING SYSTEM

5. In resolution WHA66.18, the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly requested the Director-General *inter alia* to explore options for the use of electronic voting for the appointment of the Director-General, including the financial and electronic security implications thereof, and to report thereon, through the Executive Board, to the Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly.

---

<sup>1</sup> Documents EB134/6 and EB134/6 Add.1; see also summary records of the Executive Board at its 134th session, fifth and twelfth meetings, section 4 (document EB134/2014/REC/2).

<sup>2</sup> Document EB134/6, paragraph 4.

6. In its response to this request, the Secretariat prepared a report for the Executive Board at its 134th session. It described the results of extensive discussions it had held with ILO and WMO, which are currently using electronic voting systems at their governing bodies meetings, and invited the Board to explore the use of electronic voting for the nomination and appointment of the Director-General.<sup>1</sup>

7. ILO currently uses a web-based system at its International Labour Conference which it offered to make available to WHO on a rental basis at a cost of about 20 000 Swiss francs per meeting. ILO estimated the cost of purchasing its web-based system at between US\$ 60 000 and US\$ 110 000.

8. WMO currently uses a radio-based electronic voting system for the election of the officers and members of its Executive Council. A private company provides the system to WMO with real-time support during that Organization's two-day General Assembly at a cost of about 6000 Swiss francs. The company has offered to provide the voting system and real-time support to WHO at an estimated total cost of 9100 Swiss francs (3000 Swiss francs for an Executive Board session in January and 6100 Swiss francs for the Health Assembly). According to an estimate from the company, the cost of purchasing its radio-based system is around Swiss francs 65 000.

9. Given the fact that the system is needed only once every five years for the nomination and appointment of the Director-General, the Secretariat recommended, at least on an initial basis, renting the service currently used by WMO as and when the system is needed.

10. In order to build Member States' familiarity and confidence with the electronic voting system, the Secretariat proposed to conduct a mock vote at the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly in 2016 in order to ensure adequate preparation and understanding of the system for use in the nomination and appointment of the next Director-General in 2017. If it is decided that electronic voting will also be introduced for the secret ballots to be held by the Board, the Secretariat proposed also to conduct mock votes at one of the Board's sessions in 2016. As it cannot be excluded that the electronic voting system may not work properly, the Secretariat further proposed that technical contingency arrangements should be in place to enable the vote to proceed manually.

11. In decision EB134(3), the Board recommended that the Health Assembly approve the recommendations of the Secretariat to rent a cost-effective and secure electronic voting system for the nomination and appointment of the Director-General, and to test such a system in advance through mock votes by the Board and the Health Assembly before the election of the next Director-General.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3. AMENDMENT TO RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY**

12. In decision EB132(15), the Board requested the Director-General to perform an in-depth study to ensure that the proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the governing bodies contained in document EB132/5 Add.3 are coherent with the existing Rules of Procedure and to make such other proposals based on this study and discussions by the Board at its 132nd session, so as to improve the work of the governing bodies.

---

<sup>1</sup> EB 134/6 Add.1.

13. The Director-General responded to this request in document EB133/3 and the Board provided comments thereto during its 133rd session. The Board agreed that its comments should be reflected in a new report on the subject.

14. The Secretariat duly submitted document EB134/6 for the Board's consideration at its 134th session, proposing two changes to the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board and one change to the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly. All the changes aim at giving Member States sufficient flexibility to submit draft resolutions during the session of a governing body while avoiding very late submissions. The changes to the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board adopted by the Board in decision EB134(3) establish through two new rules clear timelines for the introduction of "*proposals for resolutions or decisions*" and "*proposals and amendments related to items on the agenda*". With respect to the latter, the new rule also aligns the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board with those of the Health Assembly (the new Rule 28ter of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board corresponds to Rule 50 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly). With regard to the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly, the Board decided to recommend a precise period for introduction of "*formal proposals relating to items of the agenda*", namely "until the first day of a regular session" of the Health Assembly, as set out in subparagraph 16(3) below.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4. CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS**

15. During its 134th session in January 2014, the Board also discussed the Secretariat's proposals on reporting requirements contained in document EB134/6. In decision EB134(3) the Board recommended that the Health Assembly decide that progress reports shall henceforth be considered only by the Health Assembly and no longer by the Executive Board.

#### **ACTION BY THE HEALTH ASSEMBLY**

16. The Health Assembly is invited to consider the following draft resolution:

The Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on improved decision-making by the governing bodies,<sup>1</sup>

DECIDES:

(1) to introduce webcasting of future public meetings of committees A and B of the Health Assembly, as well as of its plenary meetings, to all Internet users through a link on the WHO website, subject to resolution of any relevant technical issues and the availability of financial resources;

(2) to approve the recommendations of the Executive Board, contained in decision EB134(3), to rent a cost-effective and secure electronic voting system for the nomination and appointment of the Director-General, and to test such a system in advance through mock votes by the governing bodies before the election of the next Director-General;

---

<sup>1</sup> Document A67/5.

(3) to delete Rule 49 and replace Rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly, with effect from the closure of the Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly, with the following text:

“Formal proposals relating to items of the agenda may be introduced until the first day of a regular session of the Health Assembly and no later than two days before the opening of a special session. All such proposals shall be referred to the committee to which the item of the agenda has been allocated, except if the item is considered directly in a plenary meeting.”;

(4) that progress reports shall henceforth be considered only by the Health Assembly and no longer by the Executive Board.

= = =