Information note on additional aspects of the election of 
the Director –General

1. This document provides information on some aspects of the process for the election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization that will take place at the Seventieth World Health Assembly. In particular, it addresses the following:

   a) Submission of credentials;
   b) Attendance at the private meeting at which the election takes place;
   c) Members of delegations capable of being designated to vote in plenary;
   d) Role and selection of tellers;
   e) Suspension of voting privileges;
   f) Procedures for the conduct of the secret ballot.

2. Further information on the election is available in the Note by the Legal Counsel (document A70/4).

A. SUBMISSION OF CREDENTIALS

3. Members wishing to vote in the election of the Director-General should be represented at the Health Assembly. They should communicate to the Director-General, if possible 15 days before the date fixed for the opening of the session of the Health Assembly, the names of their representatives, and they must deliver the credentials of their delegates to the Director-General1.

4. Credentials must be issued by the Head of State or by the Minister for Foreign Affairs or by the Minister of Health or by any other appropriate authority.2 Credentials issued in the form of a Note verbale by a Permanent Mission accredited to the international organizations in Geneva will be accepted as being issued by an appropriate authority of the State concerned.

5. Only original credentials will be considered to be “formal credentials” by the Committee on Credentials. Credentials submitted in the form of photocopies, scans or faxes, will be accepted only as provisional credentials. Member States having submitted provisional credentials, including through the GBS registration system, are required to deliver the original of such credentials by Monday, 23 May 2017 at 10:00 a.m. Credentials must refer to the Seventieth session of the World Health Assembly and bear an official letterhead.

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1 Rule 22 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly
2 Rule 22(b) of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly.
6. The credentials of delegates of Members and of the representatives of Associate Members must be communicated to the Director-General, if possible not less than one day before the opening of the session of the Health Assembly.3

7. Credentials can be delivered at the registration desk set up at WHO headquarters, starting from Thursday, 18 May 2017 until Sunday, 21 May 2017. On Monday, 22 May 2017, credentials can if necessary be delivered at the Legal Office desk at the Palais des Nations. Receipt of an acceptable credential is a prerequisite for the issuance of (pink) delegate badges to access the Palais des Nations.

8. Furthermore, Member States are encouraged to clearly identify which members of their delegation will attend the Assembly as chief delegate, delegate(s), alternate(s) and adviser(s) respectively. No more than three delegates per Member State are permitted, one of whom must be designated as chief delegate (sometimes referred to as the head of delegation).4 No limitation is imposed to the number of alternates and advisors who may accompany delegates.

9. Any change in the composition of a delegation after the credentials have been submitted requires the submission of new or amended credentials.

10. Given that the appointment of the new Director-General is due to take place on Tuesday, 23 May 2017, it is anticipated that the Committee on Credentials will meet on Monday, 22 May 2017 at 13:30. Member States are therefore strongly encouraged to deliver their original credentials well in advance of the opening of the Health Assembly and, in any event, not later than Monday, 22 May 2017 at 10:00 a.m.

B. ATTENDANCE AT THE PRIVATE MEETING AT WHICH THE ELECTION TAKES PLACE

11. The Health Assembly will consider the Board’s nomination at a private meeting.5 Accordingly, attendance will be limited to delegations of Members, representatives of Associate Members, the representative of the United Nations and essential Secretariat staff.6

12. As a matter of principle, in order to preserve the serenity of the proceedings, candidates should not attend the private meeting at which the election takes place even if they form part of the delegation of a Member State.7

13. Due to space constraints and to ensure equity, Member States are invited to designate no more than four members of their delegations at any one time for the purpose of attending

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3 Rule 22(b) of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly.
4 Article 11 of the Constitution. It is acceptable for credentials to refer to the chief delegate as the head of delegation.
7 Section B.III.1 of the Code of Conduct for the Election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization.
the private meeting at which the election takes place. Members of delegations will be requested to be seated behind their respective nameplates. Accordingly, each delegation will be provided with four “access badges” for purposes of allowing access to the Assembly Hall during the meeting at which the appointment of the Director-General takes place. Such “access badges” do not confer any right to cast the vote on behalf of the delegation. Only a person bearing a badge marked with two orange stripes, as explained in paragraph 15, will be considered capable of being designated to vote on behalf of the delegation. As a consequence any delegation wishing to cast a vote in the election should make sure that at least one of the four persons holding an “access badge” also holds a badge marked with two orange stripes.

C. MEMBERS OF DELEGATIONS CAPABLE OF BEING DESIGNATED TO VOTE IN PLENARY

14. In plenary meetings of the Health Assembly, the chief delegate is entitled to vote on behalf of his or her delegation. He or she may designate another delegate to vote on behalf of the delegation. An alternate, but not an adviser, may also be so designated. The process by which the chief delegate may designate another delegate or an alternate to vote is an internal matter for the delegation concerned, and need not necessarily be done in writing.

15. The badges of the chief delegate, delegates and alternates within each delegation will be marked with two orange stripes so as to allow easy identification of those persons capable of being designated to vote on behalf of the delegation. While there can only be three delegates in each delegation, one of whom is designated as chief delegate, there is no limit to the number of alternates who may be part of a delegation. Accordingly, there may be more than three persons in a delegation holding badges marked with two orange stripes.

16. Since they may not be designated to vote on behalf of the delegation, the badges of advisers will not be marked with two orange stripes. They may be present in the room during the election, subject to the limitation mentioned in paragraph 13. However they will not be permitted to receive a ballot paper and cast the vote of their respective Member State.

17. In order to ensure that correct badges are issued to members of each delegation, Member States are encouraged to clearly identify in their credentials which members of their delegations will attend the Assembly as chief delegate, delegate(s), alternate(s) and adviser(s) respectively.

D. ROLE AND SELECTION OF TELLERS

18. Tellers are appointed by the President of the Health Assembly before the vote, from among the delegations present. In this way, the Health Assembly provides for the involvement of a number of its own members in the conduct of the voting and in the counting

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8 Rule 19, second paragraph of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly.
9 For example, should a delegation be composed of a chief delegate, two other delegates, three alternates and four advisers, the delegation would receive in total six badges marked with two orange stripes.
of votes, thereby providing further assurance as to the fair and accurate conduct of proceedings. The tellers assist in the distribution of ballot papers and observe their placement in ballot boxes; they also count and record the votes. In doing so, they are supported by the Secretariat, including the Legal Counsel.

19. Should the Health Assembly agree with the Board’s proposed procedures for the conduct of the election, the President will appoint six tellers from among the delegations present and will allocate each teller to one of the six voting stations set up at the front of the Assembly Hall.

20. Following feedback received from Member States at the Mission Briefing on 5 April 2017, Regional Coordinators were invited to consult Members of their respective regions with a view to identifying potential tellers who might be recommended to the President of the Health Assembly before the opening of the Health Assembly.

21. In order to familiarise themselves with the election procedures, those persons so identified will be invited to participate as tellers, on an informal basis and without prejudice to the formal appointment of tellers that will take place in the Health Assembly, in the election rehearsal that will take place on Friday, 19 May 2017 at the Palais des Nations.

E. SUSPENSION OF VOTING PRIVILEGES

22. Member States whose voting privileges are suspended by the Health Assembly will not be able to vote in the election for the Director-General. However such Member States may have their voting privileges restored, and thus vote in the election, if they take the necessary action before the election takes place.

23. If a Member State is in arrears in an amount that equals or exceeds the amount of contributions due from it for the preceding two full years, the Health Assembly takes a decision under Article 7 of the WHO Constitution to suspend the voting rights of the Member in question as from the opening day of the following Health Assembly.

24. The list of Member States whose voting privileges continue to be suspended in accordance with previous Health Assembly resolutions is contained in document A70/41. That document also identifies those additional Member States whose voting privileges will be suspended as from the opening of the Seventieth World Health Assembly if they are then still in arrears to the necessary extent.

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11 Decision EB140(2) and document A70/4.
12 Article 7 of the WHO Constitution provides that, if a Member fails to meet its financial obligations to the Organization, the Health Assembly may suspend the voting privileges to which a Member is entitled.
13 Resolution WHA41.7
14 Document A70/41, paragraph 7.
15 Document A70/41, paragraphs 8 and 9.
25. Member States whose voting privileges are suspended may restore their voting privileges by reducing the amount of their arrears to an extent that would no longer justify invoking Article 7 of the Constitution.

26. Member States that wish to reschedule the payment of their arrears as part of an arrangement to have their voting privileges restored should follow the procedure set out in resolution WHA54.6 (2001). Any rescheduling of the payment of arrears requires prior approval of the Health Assembly.

27. For clarification or assistance please contact Mrs Gilda Tariga at tarigag@who.int or Mrs Charlotte Hogg at hoggc@who.int.

F. PROCEDURES FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE SECRET BALLOT

28. Should the Health Assembly agree to the Board’s proposals for the conduct of the election, voting will take place simultaneously at six voting stations set up at the front of the Assembly Hall. Six ballot boxes will be used, one placed at each voting station. The number of voting stations reflects the number of seating sections in the Assembly Hall rather than the number of WHO regions. Member States will be allocated to voting stations (and thus to ballot boxes) in accordance with where they are seated in the Assembly Hall, which is determined by alphabetical order starting with a Member determined by lot.

29. The procedure for the conduct of secret ballots to be used for the election of the Director-General is set out in the Note by the Legal Counsel (document A70/4), and is as follows16:

(a) After the opening of the meeting, the President will explain, with the assistance of the Legal Counsel, the details of the procedure to be followed.

(b) The President will then appoint six tellers from among the delegations present to assist with the procedure. The President will invite each teller to stand at one of the six voting stations set up at the front of the Assembly Hall. A legal officer will also be assigned to each voting station.

(c) Before opening the voting, the President will ask the tellers to verify that the six ballot boxes are empty. One ballot box will then be placed at each of the six voting stations.

(d) The President will ask the Secretariat to distribute the requisite number of ballot papers to each of the six voting stations.

(e) The names of the candidates will be written on the ballot papers in alphabetical order of their surnames in English. A box will be placed next to each name; a mark can

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16 These assume that the Health Assembly decides to adopt the proposals recommended by the Board.
therefore be placed in the box next to the name of the candidate for whom a Member wishes to vote.

(f) Upon the signal of the President, the voting will be opened and delegations will be invited to vote at one of the six voting stations at the front of the Assembly Hall. Delegations will be invited to vote at the voting station at the front of the seating block in which they are seated. They will be invited to do so in the order in which they are seated in the seating block.

(g) Each delegation will be invited to send one person, starting with the row at the front of the Assembly Hall, to vote. If that person in not the chief delegate, they should be another delegate, or an alternate, designated to cast the vote of the Member concerned. They should present their conference badge to the legal officer at the relevant voting station, who will verify that they represent a Member entitled to vote and that they are a person capable of being designated to cast the vote of the Member concerned. A record of these facts will be made and a ballot paper provided to the delegation.

(h) Those representing Members that have received a ballot paper will be invited to vote behind a shield placed on the table set up at the relevant voting station. They should do so by placing a mark, such as an “X” or “tick” ( “√” ), in the box next to the name of the candidate for whom they wish to vote. Members wishing to abstain may leave the ballot paper blank or write “abstention”.

(i) Any ballot paper on which more than one name is marked will be null and void. Any ballot paper bearing a distinguishing mark, such as the name of the voter, will be declared null and void.

(j) Should any voter make a mistake, the mark made by mistake should be erased or crossed out so that it is clear to the tellers that the ballot paper has been corrected and that it is equally clear for which candidate the voter wishes to vote. If, during the voting, a new ballot paper is required, the voter concerned is invited to signal this to the legal officer positioned at the voting station in question and to request a new ballot paper, which will be printed by the Secretariat.

(k) Members are invited to ensure that their delegation is present in the room before voting commences. If necessary, a delegation that is present in the room but has missed its turn to vote may nonetheless vote at the relevant voting station at any time before the President declares the voting closed.

(l) Once each Member entitled to vote and wishing to do so has placed its ballot paper in a ballot box, the President will declare the voting closed. The six tellers will each carry the ballot box from their voting station to the rostrum and place it on one of three tables. At each table, two tellers will open the two ballot boxes placed on the
table, count the number of ballot papers and verify that this corresponds to the total number of voters recorded for the two ballot boxes in question, count the votes and record the results on a sheet prepared for this purpose by the Secretariat. One teller at each table will then carry the result sheet to a table where the three result sheets will be transcribed by one of the tellers onto the appropriate voting record sheet in order to reach the overall result. The Legal Counsel will give the overall result sheet to the President.

(m) The President will report the result of the secret ballot to the Health Assembly, reading out the number of votes obtained by each candidate. The President will announce which candidate, if any, received the majority required. The President will then ask the Secretariat to destroy the ballot papers.

30. The Director-General is elected by “a clear and strong majority of the Members present and voting”. What constitutes a clear and strong majority is defined according to the stage of the election reached. Accordingly, more than one secret ballot may be necessary before a clear and strong majority of the Members present and voting is reached. The procedure set out above will be repeated for each subsequent round of voting. Further information, including on the majority required in each round of voting, is set out in the Note by the Legal Counsel (document A70/4).\(^\text{17}\)

\(^\text{17}\) Please refer to paragraphs 12 and 13.