



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

EXECUTIVE BOARD
115th Session
Provisional agenda item 7.3

EB115/20
25 November 2004

Working methods of the Health Assembly

Report of the Director-General

1. At its 114th session, during consideration of the outcome of the Fifty-seventh World Health Assembly, the Executive Board requested the Director-General to review the working methods of the Health Assembly and report back to it at its 115th session in January 2005.¹
2. During the discussion on this matter, Board members emphasized several issues of concern with regard to the running of the Health Assembly, as summarized below.
3. **Adoption of the agenda.** It was felt that lengthy discussions in the Plenary on the agenda as proposed by the General Committee should be avoided. Several Board members also expressed their concern that the agenda was overburdened and that efforts should be made to reduce the number of items.
4. **Round tables.** It was the general opinion that the round tables were no longer an effective mechanism for dialogue. Some members suggested that the time would be better used in bilateral meetings.
5. **General Committee.** The decisions of the General Committee should be more effectively and speedily transmitted to all delegations, particularly when they concerned the transfer of items between Committee A and Committee B.
6. **Statements.** Delegates should be encouraged to keep statements short (for example, a limit of three minutes could be established for statements delivered in Committees A and B), and to have written texts available beforehand to facilitate interpretation.
7. In order to address these concerns, the considerations set out below are submitted to the Board for its review.
 - The **round tables** should be discontinued, with effect from the Fifty-eighth Health Assembly.
 - The feasibility of providing more meeting rooms for **bilateral meetings** will be examined.

¹ See document EB114/REC/1, summary record of the first meeting, section 4.

- **The timetable** for the first three days of the Health Assembly could be adjusted to make more effective use of time, namely:
 - the Director-General and the invited speaker(s) would make their statements on the morning of the first day, after adoption of the Report of the Committee on Nominations
 - the General Committee would meet at 12:30 on the first day to discuss the provisional agenda as proposed by the Executive Board, allocate items to the main Committees, and approve the timetable for the Health Assembly
 - the President would deliver his or her address at the beginning of the afternoon of the first day, to be followed by adoption of the provisional agenda **as proposed by the General Committee**, and the statement by the Chairman of the Executive Board. The general discussion would then begin.
- The General Committee would meet to discuss proposals for **supplementary agenda items** after the closure of the general discussion.
- In order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the main committees:
 - Committee A would hold its first meeting on the afternoon of the first day, concurrently with the start of the general discussion in Plenary. This would have the advantage of advancing the work of the Committee and reducing the likelihood of last-minute transfer of items to Committee B. This proposal could be considered by the General Committee at its meeting on the first day.
- The time allotted for **technical briefings** could be extended to one and a half hours (from 13:00 to 14:30) to allow for a more substantive discussion.
- Consequently **afternoon sessions** of the Plenary and of Committees A and B would be held from 15:00 to 18:00.

8. A model timetable is attached for the first three days of a typical Health Assembly based on the above proposals.¹

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

9. The Executive Board is invited to take note of the suggestions for streamlining the proceedings of the first days of the Health Assembly and to comment as appropriate.

¹ The preliminary daily timetable for the Fifty-eighth World Health Assembly is contained in document EB115/21.

ANNEX

**MODEL DAILY TIMETABLE FOR THE
FIRST THREE DAYS OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY**

	Plenary	Committee A	Committee B	Other
Monday 16				
10:00	1. Opening of the Assembly 1.1 Appointment of Committee on Credentials 1.2 Election of Committee on Nominations	-	-	
10:30	[suspension]	-	-	Committee on Nominations
11:00	1.3 Reports of the Committee on Nominations Director-General Invited speaker(s)	- - -	- - -	
12:30	-	-	-	General Committee [adoption of provisional agenda as proposed by the Executive Board; allocation of items; approval of daily timetable]
14:30	Presidential address 1.4 Adoption of agenda	-	-	
15:00	2. Chairman, Executive Board 3. General discussion	... Opening of the Committee		

	Plenary	Committee A	Committee B	Other
Tuesday 17				
09:00	3. General discussion (continued) ...	Second meeting ...	-
15:00	4. General discussion (continued)	Third meeting	-	Committee on Credentials General Committee, [consideration of supplementary agenda item(s), if any; proposal of list for election, Executive Board]
Wednesday 18				
09:00	- Report of Committee on Credentials ... Consideration of supplementary agenda items, if any ... Admission of new Members and Associate Members [if any] ...	- Fourth meeting ...	- ... Opening of the Committee
15:00	-	Fifth meeting	Second meeting	
18:00	-	-	-	

= = =