

Review of entitlements of members of the Executive Board

Report by the Director-General

1. At its 146th session in January 2020, the Executive Board adopted decision EB146(16), in which it requested the Director-General to prepare a report on the entitlements of its members, for consideration by the Executive Board at its 147th session.
2. This report was therefore prepared to allow for a review of current entitlements of members of the Executive Board, considering changes to WHO travel policy over the recent years and the entitlements provided by other United Nations organizations to members of their equivalent governing bodies.

CURRENT ENTITLEMENTS OF EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

3. The current travel entitlements of the Chair and other members of the Executive Board are determined based on resolutions WHA22.5 (1969), WHA30.10 (1977) and WHA55.22 (2002).

Air travel entitlements

4. In accordance with resolutions WHA30.10 and WHA55.22, the current air travel entitlements of members of the Executive Board are defined as follows:
 - (a) under resolution WHA30.10, members of the Executive Board are reimbursed for their actual travelling expenses between their normal residence and the place of the meeting of the Executive Board, or its committees, the maximum reimbursement to be restricted to the equivalent of one economy return air ticket from the capital city of the Member State to the place of the meeting, except for the reimbursement of actual travel expenses for the Chair of the Executive Board, which will be based on a first-class air ticket;
 - (b) under resolution WHA55.22, for those members of the Executive Board whose travel time between the capital city of the Member State to the place of the meeting, including necessary stopovers, exceeds six hours, the maximum reimbursement of travel expenses shall be based on WHO travel entitlements as set out in the applicable rules and restricted to the equivalent of one business-class or equivalent return ticket.

Per diem entitlements

5. In accordance with resolutions WHA22.5 and WHA30.10, the current per diem entitlements of members of the Executive Board are defined as follows:

(a) under resolution WHA22.5, members of the Executive Board are paid a per diem rate equivalent to the standard travel subsistence allowance rates for officials of the Secretariat plus 40% (rounded to the nearest dollar) plus US\$ 3;

(b) under resolution WHA30.10, per diem payments to members of the Executive Board will, in addition to covering periods of necessary travel to and from the place of the meeting and attendance at the place of the meeting, include an additional day's per diem for those members who arrive at least one full day before the opening of the meeting and up to two additional days' per diem for those members for whom the scheduled flight time to the place of the meeting exceeds eight hours and who make a stopover during travel or arrive at least two full days before the opening of the meeting.

AMENDMENTS TO WHO TRAVEL POLICY AND CURRENT PRACTICES AMONG OTHER UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES

Amendments to WHO travel policy

6. At the time resolution WHA55.22 (2002) was adopted, air travel entitlements for members of the Executive Board were aligned with those of WHO staff members (business-class travel was granted for flights exceeding six hours). Since then, however, several amendments have been made to the WHO travel policy for staff members as part of the Organization's cost efficiency measures.

7. In 2010, the travel policy for staff members was revised, and the six-hour threshold beyond which business-class travel could be granted was replaced with a nine-hour threshold.

8. In 2018, a further revision to the travel policy resulted in the threshold for business-class entitlement being increased to eleven hours for connecting flights, with the threshold maintained at nine hours for direct flights.

9. Alongside the revised travel policies for WHO staff members, and consistent with policies adopted by other United Nations organizations, WHO has also abolished the use of business class for non-staff members (apart from certain exceptions that can only be approved by senior management).

Current practices among other United Nations specialized agencies

10. Within the context of the present report, WHO carried out a consultative review of the entitlements provided by other United Nations organizations to members of their equivalent governing bodies. The organizations consulted were WFP, FAO, WIPO, ILO and UNDP.

11. While there are differences in the structure and functioning of the various governing bodies, the review showed that, when travel expenses of members of the governing bodies are covered or reimbursed by the organization, air travel entitlements are aligned with those of staff members.

12. Furthermore, the review also showed that none of the organizations consulted applies per diem rates for governing body members that are in excess of the standard United Nations subsistence allowance rates for staff members.

13. It should also be noted that some organizations (for example WFP and ILO) only cover the travel expenses of eligible groups of governing body members and that the FAO does not provide per diem allowances for the members of the FAO Council.

PROPOSED ADJUSTMENTS TO THE ENTITLEMENTS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Air travel entitlements

14. As mentioned above, the air travel entitlements of members of the Executive Board defined by WHA55.22 (business-class travel when the travel time exceeds six hours) were originally aligned with the entitlements of WHO staff members. In order to re-align with travel policy for staff members, which has since been amended, the air travel entitlements for members of the Executive Board would need to be adjusted to reflect the intent of WHA55.22. The changes would be as follows:

- (a) members of the Executive Board will be reimbursed for their actual travelling expenses between their normal residence and the place of the meeting of the Executive Board, or its committees, the maximum reimbursable amount to be equivalent to the entitlements of WHO staff members for the same travel time.

Per diem entitlements

15. Since no other category of WHO traveller, staff or non-staff, is provided per diem entitlements in excess of the standard United Nations subsistence allowance rates, other than in exceptional situations when it is justified by the conditions of a specific trip, and since none of the other United Nations organizations consulted provides per diem entitlements in excess of the standard United Nations subsistence allowance rates to the members of their equivalent governing bodies, it is proposed that per diem entitlements for members of the Executive Board be aligned with those of WHO staff members as follows:

- (a) members of the Executive Board will be paid per diem rates equivalent to the standard travel subsistence allowance rates for staff members of the Secretariat;
- (b) per diem payments to members of the Executive Board will, in addition to covering periods of necessary travel to and from the place of the meeting and attendance at the place of the meeting, include an additional day's per diem for those members who arrive at least one full day before the opening of the meeting and up to two additional days' per diem, for those members for whom the scheduled flight time to the place of the meeting exceeds eight hours and who make a stopover during travel or arrive at least two full days before the opening of the meeting.

16. The proposed adjustments to the entitlements of members of the Executive Board would bring consistency across all areas of the WHO travel policy and align WHO with the practices adopted by other United Nations organizations (including other organizations with headquarters in Geneva).

17. In the same vein, during its 146th session, the Executive Board decided to recommend to the Seventy-third World Health Assembly that it should amend the travel entitlements of the Chair of the Board such that “with effect from 1 July 2020, the maximum reimbursement of travel expenses of the Chair of the Executive Board shall be based on the travel entitlements for the WHO Director-General”.¹

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

18. The Executive Board is invited to note the report. In its discussions, the Board is invited to consider, for recommendation to the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly, that with effect from 1 July 2021, the maximum reimbursement of travel expenses of members of the Executive Board should be based on the travel entitlements of WHO staff members.

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¹ See decision EB146(16) (2020).