

Opening of the session and adoption of the agenda

Special procedures

Report by the Director-General

1. By its decision EB147(8) (2020), the Board decided, inter alia, that in the event that limitations to physical meetings preclude the holding of the 148th session of the Executive Board in 2021 as envisaged, adjustments to the arrangements for that session should be made by the Executive Board or, exceptionally, by the Officers of the Board, in consultation with the Director-General. Accordingly, in the light of the current epidemiological situation, the Members of the Board agreed through a written silence procedure that the 148th session of the Executive Board would take place virtually, using video conference technology.

2. As a consequence of the Board's most recent decision, special procedures need to be put in place to regulate the conduct of the virtual sessions of the Executive Board, including its 148th session, so that the Executive Board can pursue its work in such a virtual format. This report is intended to enable the Board to take a decision in that regard. The special procedures are set out in the Annex to the draft decision below.

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

3. In view of the foregoing, the Board may wish to consider the following draft decision.

The Executive Board, having considered the report on special procedures,¹ decided to adopt the special procedures set out in the Annex to this decision in order to regulate the conduct of virtual sessions of the Executive Board, including its 148th session, to be held from 18 to 26 January 2021.

¹ Document EB148/2.

ANNEX

SPECIAL PROCEDURES TO REGULATE THE CONDUCT OF VIRTUAL SESSIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

RULES OF PROCEDURE

1. The Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board shall continue to apply in full, except to the extent that they are inconsistent with these special procedures, in which case the Executive Board's decision to adopt these special procedures shall operate as a decision to suspend the relevant Rules of Procedure to the extent necessary, in accordance with Rule 63 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.¹

ATTENDANCE AND QUORUM FOR THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

2. Attendance by members of the Executive Board, Member States not represented on the Board and Associate Members, as well as Observers, invited representatives of the United Nations and other participating intergovernmental organizations, and non-State actors in official relations with WHO shall be through secured access to videoconference or other electronic means allowing representatives to hear other participants and to address the meeting remotely.

3. It is understood that virtual attendance of members of the Executive Board shall be taken into account when calculating the presence of a quorum.

ADDRESSING THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

4. Members of the Executive Board, Member States not represented on the Board and Associate Members, as well as Observers, invited representatives of United Nations and other participating intergovernmental organizations as well as, at the invitation of the presiding officer, non-State actors in official relations with WHO, shall be provided with the opportunity to take the floor.

5. Member States shall also have the opportunity, if they so wish, to submit individual pre-recorded video statements of no more than three minutes, and regional and group statements of no more than four minutes. Pre-recorded video statements should be submitted in advance of the opening of the session. The video statements so submitted shall be broadcast in lieu of a live intervention.

6. Any Member State wishing to raise a point of order or exercise a right of reply in relation to either an oral or a pre-recorded video statement made at virtual sessions of the Executive Board should signal their intention to do so. It is understood that, in accordance with well-established practice, any right of reply to either an oral or a pre-recorded video statement shall be exercised at the end of the relevant meeting.

¹ This will affect notably the relevant provisions of the following Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board as they appear in the 49th edition of Basic documents: Rule 51 (show of hands vote) and Rules 56–61 (secret ballot and elections).

REGISTRATION

7. Online registration will follow normal practice. Additional information will be provided via Circular Letter.

DECISION-MAKING

8. All decisions of the Executive Board should be as far as possible taken by consensus. In any event, no decision shall be taken by a show of hands vote or by secret ballot.

9. In the event that a vote is required, voting shall take place by roll call conducted through the virtual system.

10. During a roll-call vote, should any delegate fail to cast a vote for any reason during the roll call, that delegate shall be called upon a second time after the conclusion of the initial roll call. Should the delegate fail to cast a vote on the second call, the delegation concerned shall be recorded as absent.

11. The procedures set out above are adopted for the purpose of the virtual sessions of the Executive Board only as exceptional measures to enable the work of the Organization to continue during the extraordinary situation arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and they should not be considered as setting a precedent for future in-person Executive Board sessions.

PROGRAMME, BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

12. The special procedures to regulate the conduct of virtual sessions of the Executive Board set out above shall apply mutatis mutandis to virtual meetings of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, taking into consideration the composition of the Committee, with the following exceptions: deliberations of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee in the virtual meetings shall be based on consensus; only Member States and observers as identified in decision EB146(5) (2020) may attend meetings of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee; and regarding speaking by observers, in exceptional cases where the Chair determines that the efficient and effective conduct of the Committee's business will not be affected in any way, the Chair may, as appropriate, invite observers to make interventions with respect to items on the agenda that are of particular concern to them or relevant to their mandate.

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