
Decision-making and procedural issues at the hybrid 150th session of the Executive Board

A practical guide

Decision-making at the 150th session of the Executive Board is governed by the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board as modified by the Special Procedures to regulate the conduct of hybrid meetings of the 150th session of the Executive Board.¹ Paragraphs 10 to 12 of the Special Procedures provide as follows:

10. All decisions of the 150th session of the Executive Board should, as far as possible, be taken by consensus. In any event, given the hybrid nature of the session, no decision shall be taken by a show-of-hands vote; nor shall any decision be taken by secret ballot, with the exception of the secret ballot vote to be conducted under the item entitled “Post of Director-General”.

11. In the event that a vote is required, and with the exception of a secret ballot vote to be conducted under the item entitled “Post of Director-General”, voting shall take place by roll-call. In such a case and in line with normal practice, should any delegate, whether physically present or virtually connected, 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 roll-call, the delegation concerned shall be recorded as absent.

12. The secret ballot vote to be conducted under the item entitled “Post of Director-General” shall be conducted in person among the members of the Executive Board and other delegates duly authorized to speak and vote on behalf of their respective delegations who are physically present. For these purposes, delegations of members of the Executive Board may include, inter alia, persons who are members of the diplomatic representation of the Member State concerned in Geneva or elsewhere. Such delegations may also include persons who are not nationals of the Member State concerned, including members of the diplomatic representations of other Member States, provided that such persons are not already accredited at the 150th session of the Executive Board as part of another delegation. The quorum for the conduct of the vote shall be calculated only on the basis of physical presence for the vote.

Accordingly, and with the exception of the secret ballot vote to be conducted under the item entitled “Post of Director-General”, decisions will primarily be made by consensus. If a vote becomes necessary, it will be conducted by means of a roll-call. This note provides practical guidance and information on how the voting by roll-call would be conducted at a hybrid meeting and gives information about how procedural issues can be raised during the meeting. This note does not address the secret

¹ Document EB150/2 Annex.

ballot vote under the item entitled “Post of Director-General”, which is the subject of a separate document.¹

Voting – Who can vote?

All members of the Executive Board are entitled to vote. Each member of the Board has one vote.

Within each delegation, the member (i.e. the person duly designated to serve on the Board) is entitled to vote. He or she may designate her or his alternate to vote. In the absence of the member or her or his alternate, the Chair may allow an adviser to vote, if so requested in writing by the member or her or his alternate.²

As in a fully physical meeting, the matter of authorization within the delegation is a matter for the delegation itself; in line with normal practice, if an adviser who has been registered as part of the delegation presents themselves to cast the vote on behalf of the delegation, it will be assumed that they are duly authorized to do so. Moreover, in accordance with paragraph 4 of the Special Procedures, it is understood that delegates physically present in Geneva for the purposes of the session are deemed to be duly authorized to speak and vote on behalf of their respective delegations.

Before the vote begins, delegations are asked to identify which member of the delegation will cast the vote for the delegation. As soon as voting is opened, the persons concerned should identify themselves to the Secretariat by raising their nameplate (if the person is physically present at WHO headquarters) or by using the “raise hand” function in Zoom (if the person is attending the session virtually).

All other delegates and participants are requested not to raise their nameplates or hand in Zoom for any reason during voting so that only those actually casting votes will have their nameplates or hands raised. The moderator will use the nameplates raised in the room and the “raise hand” function in Zoom to identify to whom to give the floor when each delegation is called to cast the vote. Please ensure that the person who is going to cast the vote is the member (i.e. the person duly designated to serve on the Board); or her or his alternate; or an adviser, provided the conditions referred to above are met.

If the persons who are going to cast the vote are attending the session virtually, please also ensure that they are connected to the Zoom system by the time the vote begins. They must have both audio and video³ enabled, such that they can clearly be seen on camera as well as be heard when they cast the vote (in some cases, the video function may need to be enabled centrally, in which case this will be done after the person casting the vote raises their hand in the system).

Voting procedure

The voting procedure will be outlined by the Legal Counsel before voting opens.

¹ Document EB150/INF./6.

² Rule 30 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

³ If it becomes clear during the session that there are substantial problems with video connections of multiple delegations, the Chair may propose before voting begins that votes cast through the audio connection only on the virtual system be accepted.

Members of the Executive Board will be called one by one to vote. They will be called in English alphabetical order, starting with a letter to be drawn by lot.

If more than one member of a delegation has raised their hand in Zoom and/or their nameplate, the delegation concerned should take action to ensure the hands or nameplates of all but one member of the delegation are lowered. If, when the floor is to be given to the delegation, more than one member of the delegation's hand or nameplate remains raised, the floor will be given to the member of the delegation with the highest ranking on the credentials submitted.

Delegations whose person designated to vote is physically present at WHO headquarters for the purposes of the session will be called to vote in the room in accordance with the usual practice.

Delegations whose person designated to vote is not physically present for the purposes of the session will be called to vote through the virtual system.

The Secretariat will call the name of delegations to vote in turn. When the name of a delegation is called, the person casting the vote in Zoom should unmute themselves and, if they have not already done so, activate their video camera. They should pause to ensure that they can be both seen and heard. They should then clearly state the name of their delegation.

The Secretariat will ask for the delegation's vote and the person casting the vote should again state the name of the delegation and add their vote (YES/NO/ABSTENTION). The Secretariat will repeat this information and the vote will be recorded.

Example:

Secretariat: *Country X,*

Delegation member: *This is Country X,*

Secretariat: *May we have your vote please, Country X?*

Delegation member: *Country X, abstention,*

Secretariat: *Country X, abstention.*

If the person casting the vote in Zoom cannot be clearly seen¹ and heard, the Secretariat will call the name of the delegation a second time. Unless there are obvious audio or video problems that can be immediately resolved, the name of the delegation will usually be called only twice in the first round before the roll-call progresses to the next Member of the Board.

When all members of the Board have been called on the first round, a second round will be called. Those members of the Board whose votes were not cast on the first round will be called, in the same order, on the second round.

¹ If it becomes clear during the session that there are substantial problems with video connections of multiple delegations, the Chair may propose before voting begins that votes cast through the audio connection only on the virtual system be accepted.

Those delegations that, for whatever reason, do not cast a vote in the first or second round of the roll-call will be recorded as absent.

What will happen if a voter cannot be reached?

If a voter has raised their hand in Zoom but cannot be reached when the floor is given to them, or if the connection is not sufficient to allow the vote to be cast, the delegation is invited to consider identifying a different member of the delegation to cast the vote on the second call. If on the second call, the person cannot be reached, the delegation will be given an opportunity to have an alternative member of the delegation raise their nameplate or their hand in the system and be given the floor to cast the vote.

Delegations are invited to follow carefully the guidance provided separately on maximizing connectivity in order to avoid problems arising.

Technical support can be obtained as follows:

Email: GBS-IT-Support@who.int

Phone: +41 22 791 21 11

Because visual identification is being used as an additional safeguard to promote confidence in the integrity of the vote, a vote may not be cast if there is no video connection on which the person voting can be clearly seen.¹ For the same reason, a vote cannot be accepted by chat or by a telephone connection. In extremis, a vote may be cast over a video connection with inadequate or no audio by writing the vote on a piece of paper and holding it up to the camera.

What steps are being taken to make the vote secure?

Every registered delegation member will be provided with personal links to attend the virtual rooms. The personal links for each delegation member will be sent to the unique email address provided during the registration process.

Delegation members are advised to ensure the security of the personal links that they receive. They should not share their personal links with anyone else.

They should also secure their personal mailbox with a strong password and two-factor authentication. Links for enabling two-factor authentication on common email services will be included in the guidance provided.

It is important that each participant follows these instructions carefully in order to ensure the greatest possible security of the system.

¹ If it becomes clear during the session that there are substantial problems with video connections of multiple delegations, the Chair may propose before voting begins that votes cast through the audio connection only on the virtual system be accepted.

The requirement for those voting to be seen on video when casting their votes, combined with the open and transparent nature of the vote, provides an additional safeguard for the security of the vote.¹

PROCEDURAL ISSUES

In order to raise a point of order, request a right of reply or make a procedural motion, a delegation member should either raise their nameplate (if the delegation member is physically present) or send a message to the following telephone number by SMS text or by WhatsApp:

+41 79 467 28 70

This number is staffed during meetings and may be used for points of order, requests for rights of reply or other procedural motions only. It may not be used for any other matter.

The message will be relayed to the presiding officer promptly. Further information may be requested as necessary.

Once the beginning of voting has been announced, no delegate may interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the vote. Any concerns relating to the conduct of a vote should be raised, through a point of order, before the results of the vote are announced.

Subject to the discretion of the presiding officer, it is envisaged that rights of reply will be taken at the end of the relevant day.

= = =

¹ If it becomes clear during the session that there are substantial problems with video connections of multiple delegations, the Chair may propose before voting begins that votes cast through the audio connection only on the virtual system be accepted.