

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SIXTEENTH MEETING

WHO headquarters, Geneva
Saturday, 27 January 2024, scheduled at 14:30

Chair: Dr H.M. AL KUWARI (Qatar)

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SIXTEENTH MEETING

Saturday, 27 January 2024, at 14:40

Chair: Dr H.M. AL KUWARI (Qatar)

PILLAR 4: MORE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT WHO PROVIDING BETTER SUPPORT TO COUNTRIES

1. PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE SEVENTY-SEVENTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY AND DATE AND PLACE OF THE 155th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD: Item 26 of the agenda (documents EB154/39 and EB154/40)

The CHAIR drew attention to the report contained in document EB154/39 on the provisional agenda of the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly, and invited the Board to consider a draft decision to approve the provisional agenda. She also drew attention to the report contained in document EB154/40 on the date and place of the Board's 155th session, which invited the Board to consider a draft decision to convene its 155th session on 3 and 4 June 2024.

The SECRETARY said that, based on guidance from the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, an item on the Secretariat implementation plan on reform would be included on the agenda of the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly. Furthermore, as a result of the adoption of decision EB154(12) on engagement with non-State actors, a related item would be included on the agenda of the 155th session of the Executive Board.

The representative of SWITZERLAND said that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had shown Member States that they were collectively capable of working more than ever before. It had also led to discussions on an increasingly wide and complex range of topics, including population health, health protection, mental health and health in sport, alongside long-standing concerns such as the health consequences of conflicts. The length of the current session of the Board had demonstrated the importance of allowing sufficient time for Member States to focus on subjects that would improve health for all. In that regard, her Government was convinced of the need for an agenda that would allow for effective debate.

As a result, and following informal consultations with Member States, her Government had circulated an informal proposal to amend the agenda that would allow Member States to work more effectively at the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly. It would provide for a more logical organization of debates, including by creating a single item on the agenda of Committee B for the review and update of implementation of resolutions and decisions on health conditions in areas of concern. Her Government was ready to provide further explanation if required, and called on Member States to engage with its proposal.

The representative of UKRAINE expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Government of Switzerland towards rationalizing the Health Assembly agenda and enhancing WHO's efficiency. However, he expressed concern regarding the proposed amendments, which could have unintended consequences: attention could be diverted from health emergencies, and some States may exploit the changes to divert attention from critical discussions on health emergencies, particularly the ongoing health emergency in his country. While he welcomed the collaborative spirit of the proposal, further

deliberations would be necessary to address those concerns. Alternative approaches to streamlining the agenda should also be explored and Member States should seek to reach consensus on any proposal.

The representative of YEMEN, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that, given the late circulation of the proposal and the importance of the issue, it was not yet possible for governments to express an opinion on it. He said that many similar proposals had been discussed and rejected by Member States and he did not believe that consensus could be reached. He encouraged Member States to prioritize the efficient completion of the work of the Health Assembly.

The representative Of SENEGAL said that, while his Government welcomed the idea of rationalizing the Health Assembly agenda to improve time management, it was not prepared to support a proposal that had been circulated only the day before. He therefore requested that the agenda of the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly remain unchanged, adding that his Government was ready to participate in consultations towards a different proposal.

The representative of MALAYSIA, noting that there had not been time to fully consider the proposal, said that it was unlikely that her Government would be able to support it. There was no basis for moving the discussion of resolution EBSS7.R1 to Committee B of the Health Assembly, as that resolution fell under WHO's work on health emergencies, which should remain under Committee A, particularly as it concerned a new resolution on an ongoing health crisis. Moreover, the annual resolution resulting from the standing item on health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan was always subject to a vote in Committee B, whereas the resolution resulting from the Seventh special session of the Executive Board had achieved consensus. She said that conflating the discussion of the two resolutions would cause confusion and as a result she did not support changing the agenda of the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly. That said, her Government was prepared to discuss efforts to increase efficiency by transferring some items to Committee B, as long as they were not related to health emergencies.

The representative of the COMOROS said that her Government had been unable to review the proposal and wished to retain the current version of the agenda for the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly.

The representative of EGYPT, supporting the comments made by the representative of Malaysia, expressed opposition to the changes proposed by the representative of Switzerland.

The representative of FRANCE said that the proposal of the Government of Switzerland should prompt a necessary reflection on rationalizing the Health Assembly agenda. However, he agreed that there had not been enough time for the proposal to be discussed and, therefore, no consensus had been reached. While the Board could not make a decision on the proposal at the current session, his Government would be keen to continue consultations during the intersessional period.

The representative of MALDIVES said that the proposed changes could not be accepted at the current session of the Board, and called for the agenda of the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly to remain unchanged.

The representative of BRAZIL expressed support for the proposed provisional agenda of the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly without amendment. He said that past efforts to combine discussions on WHO's work in health emergencies had not proven conducive to meaningful discussions.

Her Government was prepared to discuss how to improve the agenda and management of the governing bodies, but more time would be required before any proposal could be adopted.

The representative of BELARUS welcomed the spirit of the proposal made by the representative of Switzerland, but said that his Government had not had enough time to consider it fully.

The representative of the DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA expressed his Government's opposition to the proposal made by the representative of Switzerland.

The representative of the SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC said that, while she appreciated the efforts of the representative of Switzerland to streamline the Health Assembly's work, the standing item on the health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, was justified, in view of the ongoing Israeli occupation and should not be renamed. Moreover, resolution EBSS7.R1 on the health situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, adopted at the Seventh special session of the Board in December 2023, fell within the scope of health emergency preparedness and response under Committee A of the Health Assembly. Her Government rejected any proposed change to the agenda in that regard while the Israeli occupation continued.

The representative of PERU said that there was merit in the proposal by the Government of Switzerland to improve the work of the governing bodies. However, he agreed that more time was required to consider it; his Government was ready to participate in constructive dialogue to that end.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that, while she commended the intentions behind the proposal by the representative of Switzerland, her Government could not accept it. Member States' interest in reducing the overwhelming size of the agendas of the governing bodies would be better directed towards the ongoing work on WHO Reform. She recalled the adoption of decision EB154(5) on matters emanating from the Agile Member States Task Group on Strengthening WHO's Budgetary, Programmatic and Financing Governance, which, it was to be hoped, would address Member States' concerns in time. She urged the Secretariat to recommend ways to manage the extensive agenda of the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly.

The CHAIR took it that the Board wished to note the reports contained in documents EB154/39 and EB154/40.

The Board noted the reports.

The representative of SWITZERLAND said that, since there had been broad support for efforts to enhance the efficiency of the Health Assembly, her Government would continue holding informal consultations, with a view to reaching consensus on a proposal to modify the agenda of the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly.

The CHAIR took it that the Board wished to adopt the draft decision on the provisional agenda of the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly, contained in paragraph 4 of document EB154/39.

The decision was adopted.¹

¹ Decision EB154(15).

The CHAIR took it that the Board wished to adopt the draft decision on the date and place of the 155th session of the Executive Board, contained in paragraph 4 of document EB154/40.

The decision was adopted.¹

The representative of CHINA asked whether the informal consultations to be held by the Government of Switzerland would take place prior to the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly.

The representative of SWITZERLAND said that any Government was able to hold informal consultations on any matters that were to be discussed by the governing bodies. Her Government would therefore hold informal consultations on its proposal, as Member States had requested more time for such discussions.

The representative of CHINA asked for clarification as to whether it would be procedurally acceptable for Member States to propose changes at the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly to the agenda for that same session, given that it had just been adopted by the Board.

The LEGAL COUNSEL said that decision EB154(15) contained a provisional agenda for the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly proposed by the Executive Board. At the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly, that document would be considered at the General Committee, together with any proposed amendments, prior to its adoption by the Health Assembly. Any Member State could hold informal consultations in order to formulate or discuss proposals to amend the agenda, which would have to be submitted prior to the first meeting of the General Committee.

The representative of SWITZERLAND said that her Government had joined consensus on the adoption of decision EB154(15). During the intersessional period, it would hold informal consultations with a view to reaching consensus on amendments to streamline the provisional agenda for the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly. If no agreement could be reached, her Government would withdraw its proposal.

2. STAFFING MATTERS: Item 28 of the agenda (continued)

Statement by the representative of the WHO staff associations: Item 28.4 of the agenda (document EB154/INF./2)

Report of the Ombudsperson: Item 28.5 of the agenda (documents EB154/INF./3 and EB154/INF./4)

The CHAIR invited the Board to consider the statement contained in EB154/INF./2 and the reports contained in EB154/INF./3 and EB154/INF./4. She drew attention to the report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board contained in EB154/4, paragraphs 68–74.

The representative of the WHO STAFF ASSOCIATIONS, speaking on behalf of the staff associations of WHO, IARC, PAHO and UNAIDS, said that the deaths of WHO colleague Dima Abdullatif Mohammed Alhaj and the 134 United Nations staff members who had lost their lives at duty stations in conflict zones in 2023 were a stark reminder of the challenging and increasingly violent environments in which many staff operated. She commended all staff and the health workforce for their

¹ Decision EB154(16).

strength, courage and perseverance. The increased assessed contributions paid by Member States underpinned WHO's response to emerging diseases and multifaceted challenges. She commended initiatives to contribute to a positive organizational culture, such as the Business Management System, Respectful Workplace Initiative, the Transparency and Fairness Committee and the accompanying focus on mental health and well-being.

The staff associations wished to highlight five key areas of work that affected staff wellbeing. First, she said that lessons should be learned from the first voluntary phase of the staff mobility policy. Staff should not repeatedly serve at hardship duty stations without reprieve, and eligible staff from such stations in the African and Eastern Mediterranean regions should be rotated to locations where they could reunite with their families. The staff associations would continue to work with the Secretariat to improve the staff mobility policy, while maintaining WHO's normative and specialist functions and the duty of care towards all staff. Second, a fair and equitable remuneration system was crucial for attracting and retaining staff, especially at challenging duty stations with high inflation. The Board should call on the International Civil Service Commission for a compensation system that ensured purchasing power parity, particularly where pay was in local currency; for the accurate classification of hardship duty stations; and for a more systematic and transparent application of the Commission's methodologies.

Third, the staff associations advocated for a human rights-based internal justice system that provided affordable and confidential access to fair processes, and she welcomed the establishment of legal services that were accessible to all staff. She endorsed training on the internal justice system, and called for senior management to expedite investigations and allocate additional resources to resolve cases within an appropriate period. Fourth, the new high-level career management framework would enhance staff excellence. She encouraged the Secretariat to use generic post descriptions in recruitment, short-term development assignments and staff promotion to aid career development. Fifth, she advocated for a safe and respectful work environment and protection from excessive workloads. The Secretariat should monitor virtual processes and any new use of resources. Additionally, staff experiencing isolation and anxiety needed support and she welcomed efforts to improve mental health and access to health services at all duty stations. She reiterated that staff were WHO's most important asset and called on Member States to support ongoing efforts in all five areas of work.

The OMBUDSPERSON, speaking on behalf of all WHO ombudspersons, said that there were now full-time ombudspersons in five of WHO's regions. She explained the role of an ombudsperson, noting the importance of listening to individuals in a safe and confidential space in order to defuse tensions and explore possible solutions, many of which required collaboration with other stakeholders across WHO. Conflict was an expected part of working life, but through conflict resolution, mutually acceptable solutions could be sought without allocating blame, and situations were not left to worsen. Lessons learned from resolved cases could be used to identify and address systemic issues and trends. In 2023, three needs had been identified: to better support staff and managers in difficult situations; to improve discussions about performance; and to establish post-conflict restorative processes. The complexity of managing individuals made the relationship between supervisor and supervisee a perennial topic of the report. Managers needed support, including through confidential coaching, in how to best conduct performance management discussions, as there was a concern that comments could be misunderstood. While recognizing the need to prevent harmful conduct and promote accountability, however, ombudspersons and other key stakeholders had a responsibility to consider how best to facilitate the restoration of relationships between individuals and in teams following the resolution of conflict. That work would be further developed in the year 2024. She welcomed management's support for the wider use of mediation where appropriate, and for more training in conflict resolution. Having taken note of the comments made during the meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, she looked forward to working closely with the administration on addressing gaps in whistle-blower protection. She commended the gains made in the year 2023, noting that staff members had attested to a safer, healthier and more positive working environment.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, offering condolences for the lives lost in areas of conflict in 2023, thanked the many humanitarian actors operating in conflict areas at great personal risk. Noting the five areas mentioned in the report of the staff associations, she urged WHO management to take the staff associations' views into account, welcoming collaborative work to support the well-being of WHO staff, especially those at D and E hardship duty stations. She urged management to address the ombudspersons' recommendations as soon as possible, since they were essential for maintaining a working environment defined by WHO's core values of respect, integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination.

The representative of SLOVAKIA called for expanded efforts in the areas of staff protection, therapy following trauma and prevention of burnout. He recommended that the Secretariat should work on internal human resources strategies to alleviate unreasonable employee workloads, including by creating more uniform working conditions; and should provide legal, medical and psychological support and prevent sexual and other misconduct across the Organization and in the field. He strongly advocated for the recognition of staff members who had lost their lives in previous years.

The representative of SENEGAL, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, offered condolences to the families of WHO staff who had lost their lives. He welcomed WHO's initiatives to create a safe and respectful work environment and promote efficient and transparent management processes. In addition, he called on the Secretariat to review the International Civil Service Commission methodology for staff remuneration; establish an office to provide staff with legal assistance; develop key performance indicators to improve career progression; and employ counsellors at D and E hardship duty stations. Recognizing the importance of a respectful and productive work environment, his Region remained committed to monitoring working conditions and mental well-being, including through a permanent dialogue with workers' representatives. He called on WHO to enhance support to ombudspersons to enable them to identify solutions to the issues that had emerged during the previous year and to respond to emerging concerns.

The representative of YEMEN, drawing attention to paragraph 17 of the report of the Ombudsperson contained in document EB154/INF./3, said that his Government had sent several letters over the previous five years to the WHO country office in Yemen, the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and the Director-General, regarding a former staff member of the country office against whom disciplinary measures had been taken prior to reaching a definitive conclusion, and had received no response. The principles of transparency and impartiality required WHO to inform Member States of grievances involving their country offices or their nationals elsewhere in the Organization and of the action taken, so that action could be taken by the respective Government. Cases should be resolved in a timely manner, and disciplinary action should be delayed until an investigation had ended, unless there was irrefutable evidence and a compelling risk.

The representative of GERMANY¹ said that WHO's working culture must promote health and well-being through work-life balance, staff satisfaction and belonging. Staff members in every part of WHO should have the same access to legal advice, regardless of their ability to pay for such services. Her Government supported the mobility policy, which should be viewed as a positive addition to the work of the Organization, and said that the implementation of the voluntary phase of that policy should be used to demonstrate its practical impact. She encouraged the Secretariat to continue to work collaboratively with the ombudspersons to create a positive working environment for all.

¹ Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

The DIRECTOR (Human Resources Management) said that the Secretariat remained committed to regular dialogue and productive collaboration with the staff associations to identify solutions to issues raised, including those noted in the statement given by the representative of the staff associations. Similarly, the Secretariat worked closely with the Ombudsperson on performance management and case management issues, and she expressed appreciation for the work of the Ombudsperson in mediating and resolving issues. She echoed the concerns raised by the Ombudsperson, and said that the Secretariat would take a collaborative approach to their resolution.

The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Business Operations) reiterated that the Secretariat engaged with the staff associations and Ombudsperson on a regular basis, and said that points of divergence were uncommon. Many of the issues for which the staff association had requested support had been identified as part of the transformation agenda, and the Secretariat had taken a collaborative approach to addressing them. He called on Member States to advocate with the International Civil Service Commission for the accurate classifications of duty stations and remuneration. The Secretariat had agreed to establish an office of staff legal assistance; however, the focus was being shifted to mediation and conflict resolution to ensure that conflicts were addressed at an early stage and that legal assistance was not required. He recognized the need to enhance work on post-conflict restorative processes to build and maintain teams and reintegrate staff into the workforce. He recognized the duty of care that the Secretariat had towards its staff when implementing the mobility policy. The policy had already been extensively revised on the basis of staff concerns and input from staff and senior management.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL assured the staff of their importance, and highlighted the value of his monthly meeting with the staff associations and of discussions with individual staff members in understanding systemic problems and receiving proposed solutions. Implementation of the transformation agenda was progressing well and would help to address many staff concerns, particularly as many of the transformation initiatives had been suggested by staff members. The increase in assessed contributions was a welcome source of stability, which would have a positive impact on various systemic concerns. The Secretariat remained committed to a culture of listening and dialogue, even on points of disagreement. Finally, he recognized that the issue of remuneration was particularly acute for staff in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and he urged Member States to provide support in that regard and to advocate for staff members with the International Civil Service Commission.

Human resources: update: Item 28.6 of the agenda (documents EB154/46 and EB154/47)

Amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules: Item 28.7 of the agenda (documents EB154/48 Rev.1 and EB154/48 Add.1 Rev.1)

Report of the International Civil Service Commission: Item 28.8 of the agenda (document EB154/49)

The CHAIR drew the Board's attention to the draft resolutions relating to amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules, contained in EB154/48 Rev.1, the financial and administrative implications for the Secretariat of the draft resolutions were contained in document EB154/48 Add.1 Rev.1. She also drew attention to the report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board contained in document EB154/4, paragraphs 79–88.

The representative of CHINA, speaking in his capacity as the Chair of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, read out the action recommended by that Committee contained in document EB154/4, paragraph 88.

The representative of TOGO, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, said that, while his Region appreciated WHO's extensive work to date on diversity, equity and inclusion, it did not approve of the use of concepts that had not been agreed by consensus and were not aligned with the cultural values of Member States. He took note of the proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules on standards of conduct for staff members, promotion, the Global Board Of Appeal and staff in posts subject to local recruitment, and the recommendations of the International Civil Service Commission on the remuneration of staff in the professional and higher categories. He encouraged the Secretariat to continue action to promote gender parity at all levels of WHO, and he emphasized the value of the Africa Women Health Champions initiative. He expressed concern, however, at the persistent staffing inequalities between WHO headquarters and regional and country offices, and called on the Secretariat to focus on the rationalization and equitable distribution of human and financial resources. He welcomed the internship and training opportunities provided by the Secretariat and encouraged the operationalization of the WHO Academy, which would increase the available human resources.

The representative of the SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that, while the efforts detailed in the report on human resources contained in document EB154/46 were appreciated, the Member States of the Region strongly objected to the sentence in paragraph 47 regarding the selection of six UN-GLOBE coordinators for the benefit of a community that was not recognized in her Region. She firmly requested the removal of that sentence before the report was noted by the Board. Furthermore, she urged WHO to refrain from including references to that community in future reports and official documents.

The representative of JAPAN said that WHO needed a talented and diverse workforce to effectively fulfil its role as expected by Member States, including from under-represented countries.

The representative of DENMARK, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, emphasized the autonomy of the Director-General and the Secretariat with regard to staffing the Organization and ensuring decent working conditions for all staff in line with staff regulations, as set out in Article 37 of the WHO Constitution. She fully supported efforts to ensure that the WHO working environment was free from all discrimination. She commended the first formal selection of six UN-GLOBE coordinators and wished them well with their task.

The representative of FRANCE said that Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America aligned themselves with her statement. She welcomed the Director-General's commitment to diversity, equity, gender parity and inclusion, and called for enhanced efforts towards the full inclusion of persons with a disability. She commended the Secretariat's efforts to promote a decent working environment for all staff, including members of the LGBTIQ+ community, WHO's collaboration with UN-GLOBE, and the alignment of WHO's human resources policies with those in use throughout the United Nations system.

She supported the adoption of the report without delay or amendment, and encouraged the Director-General to continue efforts towards full and transparent reporting on human resources. She condemned any attempt to interfere with WHO's human resources policy, emphasizing the Director-General's authority on all matters related to staffing, including the creation of decent working conditions. Moreover, the human resources report contained in document EB154/46 was not a strategy or plan of action that Member States needed to adopt or implement at the national level, and as such should not be the subject of political discussion. She commended the accurate and up-to-date information provided on human resources, in accordance with the principle of transparency.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that he strongly encouraged WHO to maintain its momentum in pursuing gender parity, particularly with regard to women in head of country office or director posts. He welcomed the Secretariat's continued attention to preventing, and responding to, sexual misconduct. With regard to the proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules, he welcomed the Secretariat's intention to include gender-inclusive language in parental leave policies as originally proposed. Expressing support for the recommendations of the International Civil Service Commission, he said that it was concerning that WHO had not begun to implement the Geneva post adjustment multipliers for the Geneva duty station, despite Member States' requests.

The representative of AUSTRALIA, thanking WHO staff for their dedication and resilience while navigating the uncertainties caused by health emergencies, said that it was crucial that all WHO staff had access to a safe, supportive and respectful working environment. He commended the insights provided into the internal management of WHO, in line with the requests for transparency made by Member States.

The representative of GERMANY,¹ welcoming overall improvements in the area of gender parity, said that such efforts should focus on staff in the professional and director categories where there were fewer women, as there was already a large proportion of female employees in the general and professional entry-level positions. A solution must be found to the challenge of short-term contracts, which impeded the recruitment of international experts and talent. The development of the WHO investment round alongside the increase in assessed contributions would boost sustainable financing and help to address those systemic issues.

The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION¹ said that it was vital to create positive working conditions for all, without creating artificial groupings or singling out or infringing upon anyone's interests and beliefs. In that regard, his Government could not support the use of terminology that promoted concepts that had not been accepted by all Member States and that contradicted cultural and religious traditions in a significant number of countries. The inclusion of divisive terminology meant that the governing bodies had to spend time and effort on unnecessary discussions. He supported the proposal made by the representative of Togo to exclude the contentious terminology and called for its use to be avoided in future.

The representative of the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC¹ said that the report on human resources contained in document EB154/46 should be noted without amendment, and expressed support for the intervention made by the representative of France. She emphasized the need for gender parity and respect for diversity in human resource policies.

The CHAIR took it that the Board wished to note the reports contained in documents EB154/46, EB154/47, EB154/48 Rev.1 and EB154/49, while recording that a divergence of views existed and that the act of noting a report constituted neither approval nor disapproval of its content.

The Board noted the reports.

The CHAIR took it that the Board wished to adopt draft resolution 1 on standards of conduct for staff members, promotion, the Global Board of Appeal and staff in posts subject to local recruitment, and draft resolution 2 on parental leave, which were contained in paragraph 11 of document EB154/48 Rev.1.

The draft resolutions were adopted.²

¹ Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

² Resolutions EB154.R8 and EB154.R9.

3. COMMITTEES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD: Item 27 of the agenda

Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee: membership renewal: Item 27.1 of the agenda (document EB154/41)

The CHAIR took it that the Board wished to note the report contained in document EB154/41.

The Board noted the report.

The CHAIR took it that the Board wished to adopt the draft decision contained in paragraph 11 of document EB154/41.

The draft decision was adopted.¹

Foundation committees and selection panels: Item 27.2 of the agenda (document EB154/42)

Sasakawa Health Prize

Decision: The Executive Board, having considered the report of the Sasakawa Health Prize Selection Panel, awarded the Sasakawa Health Prize for 2024 to Dr Doreen Ramogola-Masire of Botswana.²

United Arab Emirates Health Foundation Prize

Decision: The Executive Board, having considered the report of the United Arab Emirates Health Foundation Prize Selection Panel, awarded the United Arab Emirates Health Foundation Prize for 2024 to the National Death Registry System, Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia.³

State of Kuwait Health Promotion Foundation's His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize for Research in Health Care for the Elderly and in Health Promotion

Decision: The Executive Board, having considered the report of the State of Kuwait Health Promotion Foundation Selection Panel, awarded the State of Kuwait Health Promotion Foundation's His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize for Research in Health Care for the Elderly and in Health Promotion for 2024 to the Chinese Geriatrics Society of China and to Dr Ahmed Hamed Saif Al Wahaibi of Oman.⁴

Dr LEE Jong-wook Memorial Prize for Public Health

Decision: The Executive Board, having considered the report of the Dr LEE Jong-wook Memorial Prize for Public Health Selection Panel, awarded the Dr LEE Jong-wook Memorial Prize for Public Health for 2024 to Dr Bader Al-Rawahi of Oman.⁵

¹ Decision EB154(17).

² Decision EB154(23).

³ Decision EB154(19).

⁴ Decision EB154(20).

⁵ Decision EB154(21).

Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion

Decision: The Executive Board, having considered the report of the Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion Selection Panel, awarded the Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion for 2024 to Professor Bontle Mbongwe of Botswana and to the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences of India.¹

Ihsan Doğramacı Family Health Foundation Prize

Decision: The Executive Board, having considered the report of the Ihsan Doğramacı Family Health Foundation Prize Selection Panel, awarded the Ihsan Doğramacı Family Health Foundation Prize for 2024 to Dr Jamila Taiseer Yasser Al Abri of Oman.²

The representative of KUWAIT³ requested that the Executive Board include an item on the agenda of the 155th session of the Executive Board, with a view to considering the amendments to the Statutes of the State of Kuwait Health Promotion Foundation and guidelines for the Prize, as agreed by its Selection Panel.

The CHAIR took it that the Board wished to accede to the request.

It was so agreed.

4. REPORT ON MEETINGS OF EXPERT COMMITTEES AND STUDY GROUPS: Item 29 of the agenda

- **Expert advisory panels and committees and their membership** (documents EB154/50 and EB154/50 Add.1)

The representative of SENEGAL, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, took note of the recommendations on biological standardization, selection and use of essential medicines, and evaluation of certain food additives. He supported the establishment of guidelines on the nonclinical and clinical evaluation of monoclonal antibodies and related products intended for the prevention or treatment of infectious diseases. Those guidelines would ensure the provision of accurate, up-to-date guidance to national regulatory authorities and biological product manufacturers to ensure that they were safe and effective; the development of a regulatory framework for human cells and tissues and for advanced therapy medicinal products to allow for regulatory harmonization; the timely publication of internationally recognized WHO standards to enable progress towards universal health coverage; an up-to-date WHO Model List of Essential Medicines accounting for efficiency and efficacy criteria; and a reduced prevalence of chemicals in food.

The CHAIR took it that the Board wished to note the reports contained in documents EB154/50 and EB154/50 Add.1.

The Board noted the reports.

¹ Decision EB154(22).

² Decision EB154(23).

³ Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

5. CLOSURE OF THE SESSION: Item 30 of the agenda

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL thanked Member States and civil society representatives for their collaboration and guidance, which the Secretariat would use as a basis for progress. He commended the leadership of the Chair of the Executive Board and thanked the Chair and all WHO staff members for their, often unseen, dedicated work.

Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the CHAIR declared the 154th session of the Executive Board closed.

The meeting rose at 16:50.

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