World Health Organization

Executive Board
160th session

Provisional agenda item 5.1 EB160/INF./2

20 November 2026

Practical arrangements for the conduct of the secret ballot vote for the nomination of the candidates for the post of Director-General

1. This document provides information about the practical arrangements that will apply to the secret ballot vote required for the nomination of the candidates for the post of Director-General. Background information on and a summary of the Executive Board's role in the nomination of candidates for the post of Director-General is provided in document EB160/INF./1.

2. As stated in document EB160/INF./1, in accordance with Rules 56 and 62 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, the nomination must be decided by secret ballot. Board members' delegations wishing to participate in the decision on the nomination of the candidates for the post of Director-General must be physically present at WHO headquarters in Geneva. The majority required for the proposed candidates to be nominated is a simple majority of those present and voting.

3. Within the delegation of each Member State represented on the Board, the member (that is, the person duly designated to serve on the Board) is entitled to vote; alternatively, he or she may designate any other member of the delegation to vote. The matter of authorization within the delegation is a matter for the delegation itself.

4. It is expected that the vote for the nomination of the candidates will take place on Wednesday, 27 January 2027 after completion of the initial screening, the shortlisting and the interviews of candidates. Voting for the nomination of three candidates will take place at a private meeting of the Board, in accordance with Rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board. Accordingly, attendance will be limited to the following persons: members of the Board, as well as their alternates and advisers; one representative of each Member State not represented on the Board and of each Associate Member; and the Secretariat. No official record will be made of the meeting.

5. Voters will find voting shields intended to guarantee the secrecy of the vote already set up on their tables at the outset of the meeting at which voting is scheduled to take place. The Secretariat will use ballot boxes to collect the ballot papers from the voters at the close of voting.

6. After the opening of the meeting at which voting is scheduled, the Chair will appoint two tellers from among the Board members' delegations present to assist with the procedure. The Chair will proceed to explain, with the assistance of the Legal Counsel (or his representatives), the

details of the procedure to nominate the candidates based on the relevant rules, resolutions and decisions as well as established practice.

7. Before formally commencing the vote, the Chair will ask the Secretariat to verify that the voting boxes are empty and to distribute one ballot paper to each voter physically present in the room at WHO headquarters. Upon a signal from the Chair, the voting will be opened.

8. Voters will be invited to place a mark, such as an "X" or "tick" (√), in the boxes next to the names of the candidates they wish to nominate as candidates for the post of Director-General. Voters wishing to abstain may leave the ballot paper blank or write the word "abstention". Any ballot paper bearing the name of an individual other than the candidates proposed for the post of Director-General as well as any ballot paper where the voter has selected more or fewer candidates than the number of places to be filled will be declared null and void. Any ballot paper bearing a distinguishing mark, such as the name of the voter, will also be declared null and void. Should any voter make a mistake, he or she should erase or cross out the mark made by mistake so that it is clear to the tellers that the ballot paper has been corrected and that it is equally clear which is the chosen option. If, during the voting, a new ballot paper is required, the delegation concerned is invited to raise its nameplate and request a new ballot paper, which will be provided to the requesting delegation in exchange for the spoiled ballot paper.

9. Voters will have up to two minutes to complete their vote. The Chair will make an announcement after one minute has expired. Any voter expecting to require more time to finalize her or his vote at this stage should signal this to the Chair when he makes his announcement. The Chair will then leave the vote open as needed until all voters present have had the possibility to cast their votes.

10. Once all Board members' delegations wishing to vote have done so, the Chair will give a signal for voting to close. Ballot papers should be folded once only when they are deposited in the ballot boxes. The ballot boxes will be circulated by the Secretariat, in which each voter must deposit her or his ballot paper.

11. The tellers will be invited to come to the counting table to count the votes. During the counting procedure, the tellers will be assisted by the Legal Counsel (or his representatives), as needed. After completion of the count, the Legal Counsel will give the voting record sheet to the Chair. The Chair will report the results of the secret ballot to the Board. The Chair will announce the names of the candidates having received the majority required by the relevant rules.

12. The Chair will read out the names of the nominated candidates before proceeding to consideration of item 5.3 on the draft contract of the Director-General.[1] The Chair will then adjourn the private meeting and reconvene in a public meeting to announce the name of the nominated candidates.

Contingency arrangements

13. Should any limitations to physical meetings preclude the holding of the 160th session of the Board in person, for the purposes of the secret ballot vote to be conducted under the item entitled "Post of Director-General", Board members' delegations shall nonetheless be invited to visit in person the room at WHO headquarters in Geneva where the vote is being conducted. In

[1] Document EB160/6.

these circumstances, the appointed tellers would observe the whole voting process, which would also be broadcast to the members of the Board, their alternates and advisers, and to one representative of each Member State not represented on the Board and of each Associate Member. The quorum for such vote shall be calculated only on the basis of physical presence in the room where the vote is taking place at any point during which voting remains open.

14. In such circumstances, the procedure outlined in paragraphs 2 to 12 would still apply, but with the following exceptions and additional arrangements:

(a) Voters would be asked to present themselves at WHO headquarters to vote in accordance with practical arrangements to be communicated by the Secretariat.

(b) The two appointed tellers and Secretariat staff would be physically present at WHO headquarters to support the voting process.
