

Opening of the session

Special procedures

Report by the Director-General

1. The Director-General decided, in consultation with the Chair of the Executive Board, to convene a special session of the Executive Board to be held virtually on 5 and 6 October 2020.
2. Following dispatch of the letter of convocation in respect of the fifth special session of the Executive Board, the Secretariat received feedback from Member States indicating general support for the holding of so-called “hybrid meetings”, involving a mix of physical and virtual participation. The arguments in favour of this solution were that hybrid meetings allowed for greater interaction and informal discussion on the margins – particularly important for achieving consensus on controversial issues. Further to consultations on the format of the meeting that took place during the meeting of the Director-General with the Officers of the Executive Board on 16 September 2020, the Officers recommended that the hybrid format be used for the forthcoming meetings, including the fifth special session of the Executive Board.
3. Special procedures now need to be put in place so that the Executive Board can pursue its work using such a hybrid format. The same is true for the Board’s Programme, Budget and Administration Committee. 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

4. The Executive Board is invited to consider the following draft decision.

The Executive Board having considered the report on special procedures for hybrid sessions of the Executive Board¹ decided:

- (1) to adopt the special procedures to regulate the conduct of hybrid sessions of the Executive Board set out in the Annex to this decision;
- (2) that the aforementioned special procedures shall apply to the fifth special session of the Executive Board, to be held on 5 and 6 October 2020, which will be a hybrid session.

¹ Document EBSS/5/4.

ANNEX

SPECIAL PROCEDURES TO REGULATE THE CONDUCT OF HYBRID 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. Members of the Executive Board (or another delegate of the Executive Board member's delegation) will, where possible, be physically present in Geneva for the purposes of the session.

3. Attendance by members of the Executive Board who, for any reason, cannot be physically present in Geneva for the purposes of the session, as well as other members of their delegations, 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, shall be provided for through secured access to videoconference or other electronic means allowing representatives to hear other participants and to address the session remotely. Attendance by non-State actors in official relations with WHO shall be through videoconference or other electronic means allowing representatives to hear other participants.

4. It should be noted 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

5. 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 wishing to take the floor should signal their wish to speak. Individual statements by members of the Board will be limited to three minutes. Individual statements by all Member States not represented on the Board and Associate Members will be limited to two minutes. Individual statements by Observers, the invited representatives of United Nations and other participating intergovernmental organizations, will be limited to one minute. Regional and group statements will be limited to four minutes.

6. Members of the Executive Board shall also have the opportunity, if they so wish, to submit individual pre-recorded video statements of no more than three minutes. Member States not represented on the Board and Associate Members shall also have the opportunity, if they so wish, to submit individual pre-recorded video statements of no more than two minutes. Regional and group statements made by means of pre-recorded videos will be limited to four minutes. Pre-recorded video statements

¹This 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).

should be submitted in advance of the opening of the session, namely, by Friday 2 October at 18:00 (CET). The video statements received in this way will be broadcast at the hybrid session in lieu of a live intervention and will form part of the official records of the session.

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

8. It is understood that all participants in the session may submit written statements in accordance with the guidelines on written statements for Member States.¹ Written statements so submitted, however, shall not form part of the official records of the session.

REGISTRATION

9. Online registration will follow normal practice. Additional information is provided in the Circular Letter.

MEETINGS

10. All meetings of the Executive Board shall be held in public, unless otherwise decided by the Executive Board. Hybrid public meetings of the Board shall be broadcast on the WHO website, in line with usual practice.

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS FOR RESOLUTIONS AND DECISIONS

11. It should be noted that Rule 32 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board shall continue to apply, whereby proposals for resolutions or decisions to be considered by the Board relating to items of the agenda may be introduced no later than 48 hours prior to the opening of the session.

DECISION-MAKING

12. All decisions of the Executive Board taken in hybrid meetings 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 secret ballot; nor should any decision be taken by a show-of-hands vote, unless a member of the delegation of each member of the Board is physically present in Geneva at the meeting at which the vote is taken.

13. In the event of a vote, 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.

14. In the event of a roll-call vote, 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.

¹ See decision EB146(17) (2020).

LANGUAGES

15. It should be noted that, Rule 26 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board shall continue to apply, whereby speeches made in an official language shall be interpreted into the other official languages.

PROGRAMME, BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

16. The special procedures to regulate the conduct of hybrid sessions of the Executive Board set out above shall apply mutatis mutandis to hybrid 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 hybrid meetings shall be based on consensus; only Member States and observers as identified in decision EB146(5) 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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