



**World Health
Organization**

SIXTY-FIFTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY
Provisional agenda item 19.1

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Election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization: report of the Working Group

The Director-General has the honour to transmit to the World Health Assembly the report of the Working Group of Member States on the Process and Methods of the Election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization (see Annex) and a draft resolution (see Appendix). The Working Group met in Geneva from 11 to 13 April 2012.¹

¹ This report responds to the decision of the Executive Board in EB130(7) to convene a follow-up session of the Working Group to further explore discussed proposals and finalize its work ahead of the Sixty-fifth World Health Assembly.

ANNEX

**REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP OF MEMBER STATES ON THE PROCESS
AND METHODS OF THE ELECTION OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION****INTRODUCTION**

1. The Working Group of Member States on the Process and Methods of the Election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization met in Geneva from 11 to 13 April 2012 and was chaired by Ambassador Tan Yee Woan (Singapore), with the following Vice-Chairs: Mr Faiyaz Kazi (Bangladesh), Dr Mokhtar Warida (Egypt), Mr Jacques Pellet (France), Dr Masato Mugitani (Japan), Mr Colin McIff (United States of America) and Mrs Petronellar Nyagura (Zimbabwe). The session was attended by 81 Member States and one regional economic integration organization.
2. The Working Group's discussions were characterized by a spirit of goodwill and flexibility and were conducted with a view to enhancing fairness, transparency and equity among the Member States of the six regions of the World Health Organization with respect to the process of nomination and appointment of the Director-General. The third session of the Working Group built on discussions held at its second session¹ and its first session.² Members of the Working Group expressed hope that they would conclude their work during the third session.
3. At the request of the Working Group at its second session, the Secretariat prepared the following three documents: key principles of a code of conduct,³ specific modalities for a candidates' forum,⁴ and specific modalities for a rigorous screening process at the Executive Board.⁵ A draft resolution prepared by the Chair was considered an important step towards agreement, as it contained all the elements of a "package" agreement, namely, proposals: to add equitable geographic representation as an overarching consideration in the nomination and appointment process; for the Executive Board to nominate more than one candidate to the World Health Assembly; to develop a code of conduct; to establish a candidates' forum open to all Member States; and to hold a review of the revised process after the election of the next Director-General. The Chair's draft resolution served as the basis for the deliberations of the Working Group.
4. The Working Group agreed that equitable geographical representation should be an overarching consideration in the nomination and appointment process.

¹ Outlined in document EB130/29 Corr.1.

² Outlined in document A64/41.

³ Document EB/EDG/WG/3/2.

⁴ Document EB/EDG/WG/3/3.

⁵ Document EB/EDG/WG/3/4.

The roles of the Executive Board and World Health Assembly

5. The Working Group discussed a proposal to send more than one candidate from the Executive Board to the Health Assembly as a way of strengthening the democratic nature of the process. There was substantial discussion on the number of, and process by which, candidates would be nominated by the Executive Board for the consideration of the Health Assembly; whether the candidates sent to the Health Assembly should come from different regions; and whether priority should be given to candidates from regions from which a Director-General has not been elected yet.

6. In considering the proposal to send more than one candidate from the Executive Board to the Health Assembly, the Working Group highlighted the need to maintain a balance between the roles of the Executive Board and the Health Assembly, while not weakening the role of the Executive Board in the nomination process. Agreement was reached that three candidates should be sent from the Executive Board to the Health Assembly, as far as practicable, and the modalities of the nomination and appointment processes were to be further developed.

Code of conduct

7. There was discussion on a proposal for a code of conduct and agreement that one should be developed in line with recommendation 7 of the JIU report on “Selection and Conditions of Service of Executive Heads in the United Nations System Organizations”.¹ It was pointed out that key principles of such a code could include:

- (a) promotion of equal opportunities among candidates;
- (b) abstention from abuse of a position of power;
- (c) prohibition of unethical practices such as promises, favours, invitations, gifts, etc., provided by candidates or their supporting governments, during the selection and nomination process;
- (d) respect for the rights of other parties to campaign and disseminate their ideas;
- (e) compliance and accountability;
- (f) rules of communication; and
- (g) rules for internal candidates.

8. There was agreement that the Secretariat should develop options on a code of conduct for consideration by the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly through the 132nd session of the Executive Board, building on Key principles of a code of conduct,² and taking into account best practices across the United Nations.

¹ See document JIU/REP/2009/8.

² Document EB/EDG/WG/3/2.

Candidates' forum

9. The Working Group agreed that a candidates' forum should be established, which would provide an opportunity for all candidates to make themselves and their vision known to all Member States¹ on an equal footing. The Group pointed out that possible options for the timing of a forum, include:

- (a) several weeks in advance of the nomination process by the Executive Board, soon after the candidates' names are communicated to Member States; and
- (b) immediately before or at the margins of the Executive Board;²
- (c) in the context of the Executive Board.

The Working Group also considered whether the interviews conducted in the context of the candidates' forum would complement or replace those conducted during the Executive Board.

10. The Secretariat was requested to develop options for a candidates' forum for consideration by the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly, through the Executive Board, building on Specific modalities for a candidates' forum³ and taking into account best practices, such as the candidates' forum recently held by the International Labour Organization.

Criteria

11. The Working Group discussed a revision to the criteria contained in resolution EB97.R10. The Working Group underscored the paramount importance of professional qualifications and integrity and the need to pay due regard to equitable geographical representation, and gender balance in the process leading to the nomination of the candidates that should be submitted to the Health Assembly.

12. The Working Group considered tools to promote the effective application of the criteria and procedures for developing a shortlist, including: development of a standard form for the curriculum vitae of candidates and a questionnaire to accompany the standard form; requirement of professional references as a part of the application package; and development of specific modalities to make the Board screening process more inclusive of all Member States. The Secretariat was requested to develop appropriate tools to enhance the Board's effective application of the revised list of criteria, building on Specific modalities for a rigorous screening process,⁴ for consideration by the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly and submitted through the Executive Board.

Vacancy announcement

13. The Working Group discussed a proposal to use additional media such as relevant publications, periodicals and web sites, particularly the WHO web site and social media in announcing the vacancy for the post of the Director-General in order to raise awareness of qualified candidates about the post

¹ And, where applicable, regional economic integration organizations.

² See document EB/EDG/WG/3/3, paragraph 3.

³ Document EB/EDG/WG/3/3.

⁴ Document EB/EDG/WG/3/4.

on as wide a geographical basis as possible. At the same time, it was noted that candidacies for the post are proposed exclusively by Member States and that the use of some of the media proposed might not be appropriate or cost-effective.

Review process

14. The Working Group agreed that, within one year of the election of the next Director-General, an evaluation of the revised process and methods for the election of the Director-General should be conducted by the Executive Board. Such an evaluation could be undertaken during a regular or special session of the Board or through a Working Group established by the Board. There was agreement that the evaluation should allow for equal participation by all Member States¹ and that the outcome report of the evaluation should be submitted to the Health Assembly.

Amendments to the Rules of Procedure

15. The Working Group considered the modalities of the nomination and appointment process and potential amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board and the World Health Assembly. In this context, a range of views were expressed on the approach that should be used, and the extent to which the Working Group should provide guidance to the Executive Board on amending the Rules of Procedure, such as with respect to specifically identifying Rules that should be maintained or amended.

16. The Secretariat outlined Rules of Procedure that would potentially have to be amended to implement the resolution, particularly in connection with the proposals for: the Board to nominate three candidates to the Health Assembly; the Health Assembly to appoint the Director-General from among three candidates; and the establishment of a candidates' forum. In this regard, Rule 52 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board and Rules 107 and 108 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly would potentially require amendment.

17. The Secretariat outlined some possible modalities for nominating three candidates out of the shortlist, including the following: (1) rounds of voting in which the candidate receiving the least number of votes would be dropped until arriving at three candidates; (2) selection of the three candidates which obtained the highest number of votes in a single round of voting; and (3) rounds of voting whereby those candidates receiving a majority of votes would receive the nomination, as outlined in Rule 51 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

18. During the discussion, the Working Group noted that some existing procedures of the Executive Board and the Health Assembly, involving secret ballots, shortlisting of candidates and interviews, have been useful and effective. Moreover, there was discussion on the appropriate majority for electing the Director-General and agreement that the Executive Board would consider that the Director-General should be elected by a clear and strong majority.

19. It was noted that possible amendments would depend upon further work undertaken by the Executive Board. Additional time would also be needed for a thorough analysis of the Rules of Procedure and how they would be affected by the resolution. In this regard, the Working Group requested that the Director-General undertake such an analysis and present to the Executive Board options for amendments to the Rules in order to implement the resolution.

¹ And, where applicable, regional economic integration organizations.

ACTION BY THE HEALTH ASSEMBLY

20. The Health Assembly is invited to take note of the report of the Working Group and to adopt the draft resolution contained in the Appendix, which was agreed in the Working Group by consensus.

Appendix

DRAFT RESOLUTION

The World Health Assembly,

PP1 Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, *inter alia*, Article 101, paragraph 3;

PP2 Having regard to the Constitution of the World Health Organization, including Article 31;

PP3 Recalling resolution EB128.R14 on the Election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization, which established a time-bound and results-oriented Working Group on the process and methods of the election of the Director-General of WHO with a view to enhancing fairness, transparency, and equity among the Member States of the six regions of the Organization with respect to the process of nomination and appointment of the Director-General of WHO;

PP4 Reaffirming that the qualifications of the candidates are of paramount importance in the selection and nomination process of the Director-General, and that due regard should be paid to the importance of recruiting future Directors-General on as wide a geographical basis as possible from Member States of the six regions of the Organization;

PP5 Reaffirming the critical importance of the role of the Executive Board in the screening and nomination, and of the World Health Assembly in electing and appointing the Director-General, and therefore the need to consider ways to strengthen and improve relevant elements of these procedures;

PP6 Having considered the report of the Working Group on the process and methods of the election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization,¹

1. DECIDES that:

- (a) due regard shall be paid to the principle of equitable geographical representation in the overall process of nomination, election and appointment of the Director-General of WHO, being mindful at the same time that candidates appointed to this post have so far only come from three out of the six regions of the Organization, and that the paramount consideration of the necessity of securing the highest standard of efficiency, competence and integrity in the election and appointment of the Director-General shall be maintained;
- (b) the Executive Board will nominate three candidates for the Health Assembly's consideration for the appointment of the Director-General, paying due regard to equitable geographical representation;
- (c) in exceptional circumstances, where the above is not practicable, such as where there is only one or two candidates, the Executive Board may decide to nominate less than three candidates for consideration by the Health Assembly for appointment as Director-General;

¹ See document A65/38.

(d) a code of conduct, in line with Recommendation 7¹ of the JIU's report "Selection and Conditions of Service of Executive Heads in the United Nations System Organizations",² which candidates for the post of Director-General and Member States should undertake to observe and respect, will be developed by the Secretariat to be considered by the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly through the Executive Board;

(e) a candidates' forum, open to all Member States,³ shall be established to provide a non-decision-making platform for candidates to make themselves and their vision known to Member States on an equal basis. The modalities of the candidates' forum will be developed by the Secretariat to be considered by the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly through the Executive Board;

(f) the Executive Board should ensure that the nominated candidates fulfil the following criteria, while underscoring the paramount importance of professional qualifications and integrity, and the need to pay due regard to equitable geographical representation, as well as gender balance in the process leading to the nomination of the candidate(s) that should be submitted to the Health Assembly; he or she should have:

- (1) a strong technical background in a health field, including experience in public health;
- (2) exposure to and extensive experience in international health;
- (3) demonstrable leadership skills and experience;
- (4) excellent communication and advocacy skills;
- (5) demonstrable competence in organizational management;
- (6) sensitivity to cultural, social and political differences;
- (7) strong commitment to the mission and objectives of WHO;
- (8) good health condition required of all staff members of the Organization;
- (9) sufficient skill in at least one of the official working languages of the Executive Board and the Health Assembly;

(g) appropriate tool(s) to enhance the Executive Board's effective application of the revised list of criteria will be developed by the Secretariat to be considered by the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly through the Executive Board;

¹ Recommendation 7: "The legislative/governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should condemn and prohibit unethical practices such as promises, favours, invitations, gifts, etc., provided by candidates for the post of executive head or their supporting governments during the selection/election campaign, in return for favourable votes for certain candidates."

² See document JIU/REP/2009/8.

³ And, where applicable, regional economic integration organizations.

(h) an evaluation, open to all Member States,¹ will be conducted by the Executive Board² within one year from the appointment of the next Director-General, to assess the efficacy of the revised process and methods, in order to discuss any need for further enhancing fairness, transparency and equity among the Member States of the six regions of WHO;

2. REQUESTS the Executive Board to give effect to all the provisions outlined in paragraph 1 above and to submit a report on the implementation of this resolution to the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly, with the exception of the report referred to in operative paragraph 1(h) which will be submitted to a later session of the Health Assembly;

3. FURTHER REQUESTS the Executive Board, in implementing operative paragraph 2, to do so on the understanding that some of the existing procedures of the Executive Board and Health Assembly such as those involving secret ballots, shortlisting, voting and interviewing of candidates have proven to be useful and effective and should be continued. The Executive Board will also consider that the Director-General should be appointed by a clear and strong majority at the Health Assembly;

4. REQUESTS the Director-General to propose to the Executive Board amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board in order to implement this resolution.

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¹ And, where applicable, regional economic integration organizations.

² This agenda item shall be an open meeting as per the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, Rule 7(b).