

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

The Sixty-fifth World Health Assembly,

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

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

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 the World Health Organization 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 the World Health Organization;

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;

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;

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 the World Health Organization, 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;

¹ Document A65/38.

- (b) the Executive Board will nominate three candidates for the Health Assembly's consideration for the appointment of the Director-General of the World Health Organization, 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 of the World Health Organization ;
- (d) a code of conduct, in line with Recommendation 7¹ of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit "Selection and Conditions of Service of Executive Heads in the United Nations System Organizations",² which candidates for the post of Director-General of the World Health Organization and Member States should undertake to observe and respect, will be developed by the Secretariat for consideration 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;

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 Document JIU/REP/2009/8.

³ And, where applicable, regional economic integration organizations.

- (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 for consideration by the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly through the Executive Board;
 - (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 of the World Health Organization, 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 paragraph 1(h) which will be submitted to a later session of the Health Assembly;
3. FURTHER REQUESTS the Executive Board, in implementing 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.

Tenth plenary meeting, 26 May 2012
A65/VR/10

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¹ And, where applicable, regional economic integration organizations.

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