

WHO reform processes, including the transformation agenda, and implementation of United Nations development system reform

WHO reform

Report by the Director-General

1. At its 144th session in January 2019, the Board considered the report by the Director-General presenting the necessary amendments to replace or supplement gender-specific language in the Rules of Procedure of the governing bodies to indicate both feminine and masculine.¹
2. The Board then adopted a decision² amending its Rules of Procedure in order to replace or supplement gender-specific language so as to indicate both feminine and masculine forms in the English language only and to follow United Nations' practice for the other five official and working languages of WHO's governing bodies. It also decided that such amendments will come into effect at the moment when the Director-General rennumbers the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.
3. In its decision, the Board also recommended that the Seventy-second World Health Assembly amend its Rules of Procedure in the same manner, replacing or supplementing gender-specific language so as to indicate both feminine and masculine forms in the English language only and following United Nations' practice for the other five official and working languages of WHO's governing bodies.
4. The Board further recommended that the Health Assembly decide that such amendments will come into effect at the moment when the Director-General rennumbers the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly.
5. Examples of proposed amendments to the English version of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly, in line with the examples set out in the Annex to document EB144/33, are shown in the Annex to the present report.

¹ Document EB144/33 and the summary records of the Executive Board at its 144th session, fourteenth meeting, section 1.

² Decision EB144(4) (2019).

ACTION BY THE HEALTH ASSEMBLY

6. The Health Assembly is invited to adopt the following draft decision, in line with the Executive Board's recommendations in decision EB144(4):

The Seventy-second World Health Assembly decided:

(1) to amend its Rules of Procedure in line with the examples set out in the Annex to document A72/50 in order to replace or supplement gender-specific language so as to indicate both feminine and masculine forms in the English language only and to follow United Nations' practice for the other five official and working languages of WHO's governing bodies, in accordance with Rule 119 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly;

(2) that the amendments shall come into effect at the moment when the Director-General rennumbers the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly in accordance with, and subject to the adoption by the Health Assembly of, the draft decision recommended by the Board in decision EB143(7) (2018).¹

¹ See document A72/52.

ANNEX¹

**EXAMPLES OF THE USE OF GENDER-SPECIFIC LANGUAGE IN THE ENGLISH
VERSION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE
WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY AND PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**

Cases where gender-specific language is used	Examples from the English Version of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly	
	Current version	Proposed amended version
“He” (masculine singular pronoun)	The Director-General shall be ex officio Secretary of the Health Assembly and of any subdivision thereof. He may delegate these functions. (Rule 16)	The Director-General shall be ex officio Secretary of the Health Assembly and of any subdivision thereof. She or Hhe may delegate these functions. (Rule 16)
“His” (masculine singular possessive pronoun)	In plenary meetings the chief delegate may designate another delegate who shall have the right to speak and vote in the name of his delegation on any question. (Rule 19)	In plenary meetings the chief delegate may designate another delegate who shall have the right to speak and vote in the name of her or his delegation on any question. (Rule 19)
“Him” (masculine singular objective pronoun)	Moreover, upon the request of the chief delegate or any delegate so designated by him the President may allow an adviser to speak on any particular point. (Rule 19)	Moreover, upon the request of the chief delegate or any delegate so designated by her or him the President may allow an adviser to speak on any particular point. (Rule 19)
“Chairman” and “vice-chairman” (masculine singular nouns)	The chairman of a main committee shall, in the case of absence, designate a vice-chairman of the committee as his substitute, provided that this vice-chairman shall not have the right to vote if he is of the same delegation as another member of the General Committee. ... (Rule 29)	The chair man of a main committee shall, in the case of absence, designate a vice-chair man of the committee as her or his substitute, provided that this vice-chair man shall not have the right to vote if she or he is of the same delegation as another member of the General Committee. ... (Rule 29)
“Chairmen” (masculine plural noun)	The Chairmen of these main committees shall be elected by the Health Assembly. (Rule 32)	The Chair smen of these main committees shall be elected by the Health Assembly. (Rule 32)

¹ Deletions are shown with strikethrough; insertions are shown in bold.

Cases where gender-specific language is used	Examples from the English Version of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly	
	Current version	Proposed amended version
“Vice-Chairmen” (masculine plural noun)	Each main committee shall elect two Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur. (Rule 34)	Each main committee shall elect two Vice-Chair men and a Rapporteur. (Rule 34)
“Himself” (masculine singular reflexive pronoun)	Thus, within the scope of the Rules of Procedure, delegates or representatives are enabled to direct the attention of the presiding officer to violations or misapplications of the Rules by other delegates or representatives or by the presiding officer himself. (Description of the Concept of a Point of Order) ^a	Thus, within the scope of the Rules of Procedure, delegates or representatives are enabled to direct the attention of the presiding officer to violations or misapplications of the Rules by other delegates or representatives or by the presiding officer herself or himself. (Description of the Concept of a Point of Order) ^a

^a Adopted as a supplement to the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly through resolution WHA29.37.

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