

# **Process for the election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization**

## **Report by the Secretariat**

1. The Executive Board at its 148th session in January 2021 adopted decision EB148(11) on the process for the election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization, which recommended to the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly the adoption of a decision on provision of financial travel support be provided to all candidates for the post of Director-General participating in the candidates' forums; and that, if there is more than one candidate nominated by the Executive Board, the nominated candidates address the Health Assembly before the vote for appointment of the Director-General, on the understanding that: (a) statements shall be limited to a maximum of 15 minutes; (b) the order of statements shall be decided by lot; and (c) there shall be no questions and answers after the statement.<sup>1</sup>

2. By way of background, the Board considered it advisable to provide financial support to the candidates for the post of Director-General given its statutory nature. The Board further considered it advisable to require the nominated candidates to address the Health Assembly before the vote if the Board nominates more than one candidate. As mentioned in the note by the Legal Counsel to the Board on this matter, and in the discussion of that note,<sup>2</sup> although Member States will already have had an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the candidates and their electoral platforms through the web forum, the candidates' forum and the interviews at the Executive Board, Member States may feel that hearing the candidates one last time at the end of the electoral process may assist their consideration of the Board's nomination.

## **PLEDGE TO OBSERVE THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE ELECTION OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION**

3. Paragraph A.III (Responsibilities) of the Code of Conduct for the election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization ("the Code") states that "It is the responsibility of Member States and candidates for the post of Director-General of the World Health Organization to observe and respect this code." Paragraph B.I (Submission of proposals) of the Code further provides that Member States should include in their proposal a statement to the effect that they and the persons proposed by them pledge to observe the provisions of the Code.

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<sup>1</sup> See document A74/24 Add.1 for information on voting machines provided in response to decision EB148(11) (2021).

<sup>2</sup> Document EB148/38; see also the summary records of the Executive Board at its 148th session, eleventh meeting, section 5.

4. In reply to requests from Member States, made at the Seventy-third World Health Assembly,<sup>1</sup> to provide greater visibility to the Code and reinforce observance of its provisions, the Secretariat intends systematically to remind all Member States and candidates about the Code and its provisions in communications addressed to them in the context of the process for the election of the Director-General. In addition, the Secretariat intends to make the statements by which Member States and candidates pledge to observe the provisions of the Code publicly available by posting them on WHO website.

#### **FINANCIAL TRAVEL SUPPORT TO CANDIDATE(S) ADDRESSING THE SEVENTY-FIFTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY**

5. During the last election of the Director-General, financial travel support was provided to all candidates addressing the Health Assembly at which the appointment took place. On that occasion, travel support consisted of an economy-class airline ticket and a per diem for the time necessary for addressing the Health Assembly. In light of this practice, the Secretariat intends to provide the same level of support to candidates who will address the Seventy-fifth World Health Assembly at which the appointment will take place.

#### **ACTION BY THE HEALTH ASSEMBLY**

6. The Health Assembly is invited to note the report and adopt the draft decision recommended by the Executive Board in decision EB148(11).

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<sup>1</sup> See summary record of the Seventy-third World Health Assembly, Committee B, second meeting (section 2) and third meeting (section 2).