

Participation of Member States in WHO meetings

Current practices for funding participation of Member States in WHO meetings

Report by the Director-General

BACKGROUND

1. In May 2022, the Seventy-fifth World Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA75.18 on the outcomes of the SIDS Summit for Health: For a Healthy and Resilient Future in Small Island Developing States, in which it decided that a report from the Secretariat on current practices for funding participation of Member States in WHO's meetings was to be provided at the Seventy-sixth World Health Assembly in 2023.
2. In line with that decision, this report presents a summary of current practices for funding the participation of Member States in WHO meetings. As Member States' participation in nongoverning bodies meetings is funded on an ad hoc basis, the present report focuses on meetings of WHO's governing bodies.

CURRENT PRACTICES

Sessions of the Health Assembly

3. As per resolution WHA50.1 (1997), only Member States classified as Least Developed Countries (LDC) shall be reimbursed for the actual travelling expenses of one delegate each. The maximum reimbursement is limited to the equivalent of one economy return air ticket from the capital city of the Member State to the place of the meeting. The Organization will not provide per diem payments or reimburse any other expenses beyond the air fare costs.
4. To request reimbursement of travel expenses, delegates are required to provide a ticket invoice, travel itinerary and passport information to the Organization. Delegates are reimbursed through a bank card issued to them at the meeting venue by the WHO Treasury Unit (hqtravelpayment@who.int).

Sessions of the Executive Board and/or meetings of its committees

5. As per resolution WHA30.10 (1977), to facilitate their participation, members of the Executive Board are reimbursed for their actual travelling expenses between their normal residence and the place of the meeting of the Executive Board or its committees.

6. As per decision WHA74(19) (2021), the maximum reimbursement of travel expenses of members of the Executive Board is based on the travel entitlements of WHO staff members, which include per diem payments at a rate equivalent to the United Nations standard per diem.

7. As per decision WHA73(13) (2020), the maximum reimbursement of travel expenses for the Chair of the Executive Board shall be based on the travel entitlements for the WHO Director-General.

8. Flight tickets for Executive Board members are normally booked through the WHO official travel agent. Alternatively, Executive Board members may purchase their own tickets and be reimbursed up to the maximum amount that the Organization would pay for their air transport entitlement.

Representatives to Regional Committees

9. As per resolution WHA34.4 (1981), each Member or Associate Member of a WHO Regional Committee whose contribution to the WHO regular budget is at the minimum rate in the scale of assessments, is provided with a return economy class ticket – from the capital city of the Member State to the place of the session – for one delegate or associate delegate from that Member State. The Organization does not provide per diem payments or reimburse any other expenses beyond the air fare costs.

Formal meetings mandated by the governing bodies

10. To facilitate the fulfilment of their responsibilities, travel support, upon request, was exceptionally given for members of the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body to draft and negotiate a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (INB) to participate in formal in-person meetings.

11. Travel entitlements and reimbursement processes are the same as those provided to Executive Board members, as outlined in paragraphs 5, 6 and 8 above.

ACTION BY THE HEALTH ASSEMBLY

12. The Health Assembly is invited to note the report, considering it in conjunction with the report on the Voluntary Health Trust Fund for small island developing States (terms of reference) contained in document A76/34.

13. The Health Assembly is further invited to indicate whether it supports the exceptional travel support extended to members of the Bureaus of working groups mandated by the governing bodies and, if that is the case, whether the Secretariat should develop criteria for the provision of any such exceptional travel support.

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