Process of handling and investigating potential allegations against WHO Directors-General

Report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board to the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly

1. The Member State co-leads (Jose Acacio of Australia and Ding Yang of China) presented the development process for and the key elements of the proposed process for managing and handling potential allegations against Directors-General, as set out in their report. The co-leads presented recent edits made since the circulation of a draft version to Member States on 1 May 2024, and one further edit to be reflected in a Rev.1 document. They highlighted the balance between, on the one hand, ensuring the independence and integrity of the investigation process by avoiding politicization and conflicts of interest and, on the other, the need for governing bodies’ decision-making and oversight.

2. Committee Members thanked the Member State co-leads and the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee for the extensive work that they had conducted to develop their respective draft proposals, and the Secretariat for its technical advice. Committee members generally welcomed the proposed process, and had a few key questions regarding the accountability lines between the independent external investigative entity (EIE) and the Executive Board, and the alignment of the current proposal with the governance practices of other United Nations specialized agencies.

3. The Member State co-leads thanked the Legal Counsel for his guidance and inputs to the development process and described the responses to that guidance in the proposed process, which the Committee generally supported. The Legal Counsel advised on some legal implications of the proposed procedure, including regarding the role of the external investigative entity in the initiation of disciplinary proceedings. The Chair of the Executive Board noted for the Committee’s consideration that the Executive Board and/or Health Assembly should exercise proper oversight throughout the process of the investigation and indicated that further consultation on this would be useful. The Chair of the Executive Board supported the proposal moving forward to the Health Assembly, where Member States would request the Secretariat to put in place measures to give effect to those procedures and to aid their implementation.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE HEALTH ASSEMBLY

4. The Committee, on behalf of the Executive Board, recommended that the Health Assembly should note the report and adopt the draft decision contained in document A77/27.

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1 Document A77/27.