

## **Special procedures**

### **Report by the Director-General**

1. Through decision EB149(11) (2021) the Executive Board decided, inter alia, that the Second special session of the World Health Assembly should be held in person, or virtually if limitations to physical meetings precluded the holding of the special session in person. The Board further decided that, in the event that limitations to physical meetings precluded the holding of the special session as envisaged, a decision on the format of the special session should be taken by the Executive Board through a written silence procedure or, exceptionally, by the Officers of the Board, in consultation with the Director-General.
2. Following Member States' consultations, the Executive Board further decided, through a written silence procedure, that the Second special session of the World Health Assembly would be held in an hybrid format.
3. As a consequence of the Board's decision, special procedures need to be put in place so that the Health Assembly can pursue its work during its Second special session in a "hybrid" format (i.e. meetings that may be attended by delegates of Member States either in person – subject to capacity and other limitations – or "virtually" through an electronic platform). This report is intended to enable the Health Assembly to take a decision in that regard. The special procedures to regulate the conduct of "hybrid" meetings of the Health Assembly are set out in the Annex to the draft decision below.

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

4. In view of the foregoing, the Health Assembly may wish to consider the following draft decision.

The Second special session of the World Health Assembly, having considered the report on special procedures,<sup>1</sup> decided to adopt the special procedures set out in the Annex to this decision in order to regulate the conduct of hybrid meetings of the Second special session of the World Health Assembly, opening on 29 November 2021 and closing no later than 1 December 2021.

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<sup>1</sup> Document SSA2/2.

## ANNEX

### **SPECIAL PROCEDURES TO REGULATE THE CONDUCT OF HYBRID MEETINGS OF THE SECOND SPECIAL SESSION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY**

#### **RULES OF PROCEDURE**

1. The Rules of Procedure of the Health Assembly shall continue to apply in full, except to the extent that they are inconsistent with these special procedures, in which case the Health Assembly's decision to adopt these special procedures shall operate as a decision to suspend the relevant Rules of Procedure to the extent necessary in accordance with Rule 122 of the Rules of Procedure of the Health Assembly.<sup>1</sup>

#### **ATTENDANCE**

2. Member States and Associate Members shall, where possible and subject to capacity and other limitation due to public health considerations, be physically present for the purposes of the session.

3. Attendance by delegates from Member States and Associate Members who, for any reason, are not able to be physically present for the purposes of the session, as well as of Observers, invited representatives of the United Nations and of other participating intergovernmental organizations; and non-State actors shall be through a secured access to videoconference or other electronic means allowing representatives to hear other participants and to address the meeting remotely.

#### **QUORUM**

4. It is understood that virtual attendance of Member States shall be taken into account when calculating the presence of a quorum.

#### **ADDRESSING THE HEALTH ASSEMBLY**

5. Member States, Associate Members, Observers, invited representatives of the United Nations and of other participating intergovernmental organizations as well as, at the invitation of the presiding

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<sup>1</sup> This will affect notably the relevant provisions of the following Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly as they appear in the 49th edition of the Basic Documents:

- Rules 30–42 (General Committee, main committees and subcommittees), as well as the relevant provisions of Rule 13 and Rules 44–48 insofar as they refer to these committees;
- Rules 73, 78–79 and 81 through 86 (voting by show of hands and secret ballot);
- Rules 90 and 92–95 (records of the Health Assembly); and
- Rule 121 (amendments and additions to the Rules of Procedure) insofar as these Special Procedures may be regarded as additions to the Rules of Procedure and to the extent that Rule 121 requires receipt and consideration of a report thereon by an appropriate committee.

officer, non-State actors in official relations with the Organization, shall be provided with the opportunity to take the floor.

6. Member States and Associate Members shall also have the opportunity, if they so wish, to submit individual pre-recorded video statements of no more than three minutes, and regional and group statements of no more than four minutes. Pre-recorded video statements should be submitted in advance of the opening of the session. The video statements so submitted shall be broadcast in lieu of a live intervention.

7. Any Member State wishing to raise a point of order or exercise a right of reply in relation to either an oral or a pre-recorded video statement made at the Health Assembly should signal their intention to do so. It is understood that, in accordance with well-established practice, any right of reply to either an oral or a pre-recorded video statement shall be exercised at the end of the relevant meeting.

## **COMMITTEES**

8. All business of the Second special session shall be conducted in plenary. Accordingly, the General Committee, the main committees and subcommittees shall not be established. Matters normally determined by the General Committee under Rule 32 shall be determined by the plenary. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Committee on Credentials shall be appointed to assess the credentials of Member States and Associate Members in accordance with Rule 24 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly.

## **DECISION-MAKING**

9. All decisions of the Second special session of the Health Assembly should, as far as possible, be taken by consensus. In any event, no decision shall be taken by show of hands or secret ballot.

10. In the event that a vote is required, voting shall take place by roll call. Delegations whose Chief Delegate, or other Delegate or Alternate designated to vote, are not physically present for the purposes of the session will be called to vote through the virtual system.

11. During a roll-call vote, should any delegate fail to cast a vote for any reason, that delegate shall be called upon a second time after the conclusion of the initial roll call. Should the delegate fail to cast a vote on the second call, the delegation concerned shall be recorded as absent.

## **OFFICIAL RECORDS**

12. Summary records of all the public plenary meetings of the Second special session of the World Health Assembly shall be made available in English only. No verbatim records will be made of public plenary meetings of the Second special session.

## SCOPE OF THESE SPECIAL PROCEDURES

13. The procedures set out above are adopted for the purpose of the Second special session of the World Health Assembly only, as exceptional measures to enable the work of the Organization to continue during the extraordinary situation arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, and should not be considered as setting a precedent for future Health Assemblies.

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