

Teleconference with the Bureau of the Executive Board regarding proposed dates for PBAC32 and the resumed sessions of WHA73 and EB147

Friday 31 July 2020

Participants

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General
Dr Harsh Vardhan (India), Chair of the Board
Dr Ahmed Mohammed Al Saidi (Oman), Vice-Chair 1 of the Board
Dr Patrick Amoth (Kenya), Vice-Chair 2 of the Board
Mr Thomas Ifland (Germany), Alternate Vice-Chair 3 of the Board, Senior Advisor, Federal Ministry of Health
Ms Volda Lawrence (Guyana), Vice-Chair 4 of the Board

Unable to attend

Mr Björn Kümmel (Germany), Vice-Chair 3 of the Board
Dr Amelia Afuha'amango Tu'ipulotu (Tonga), Rapporteur

Observer

Mr Simon Brombeiss (Germany), Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva

Secretariat

Ms Jane Ellison, Executive Director, External Relations and Governance
Dr Timothy Armstrong, Director, Department of Governing Bodies
Mr Derek Walton, Legal Counsel
Ms Gina Vea, Unit Head, Governance, Department of Governing Bodies
Mr Jude Osei, Unit Head, Protocol, Department of Governing Bodies
Ms Jane Nicholson, Head, Language Services, Department of Governing Bodies
Ms Claudia Nannini, Legal Officer, Office of the Legal Counsel
Ms Patricia Durand Stimpson, Protocol Assistant, Department of Governing Bodies

1. The Director-General and the Officers of the Executive Board met by teleconference on Friday 31 July in order to consider proposed dates for PBAC32 and the resumed sessions of WHA73 and EB147.

2. The Chair of the Executive Board welcomed participants. In his opening remarks, he noted the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world and expressed thanks to those on the frontline. The pandemic had drawn attention worldwide to the importance of the health sector and global cooperation. The forthcoming meetings would contribute to timely, adequate and coordinated response in the post-pandemic phase.

3. The Director-General gave a short progress report on the Covid-19 response, including the establishment of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPR) to evaluate the world's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. He highlighted the importance of continuing the important work of the governing bodies during this challenging time, including the importance of setting the dates of the forthcoming governing body meetings.

4. The Director, Governing Bodies, introduced the subject of the meeting. In view of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and public health restrictions, which continued to preclude the possibility of holding governing body meetings in the usual format, it was proposed that the Executive Board decide at this time only on the dates of the forthcoming meetings and take decisions on the format closer to the actual dates of the meetings.

5. Taking into consideration the schedule of the Regional Committees and other meetings in the autumn, as well as the availability of facilities, it was proposed that:

- the resumed session of the Seventy-third World Health Assembly open on Monday, 9 November 2020 and suspend no later than Saturday, 14 November 2020;
- the resumed session of 147th session of the Executive Board be held on Monday 16 November 2020;
- the Thirty-second meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee be held on 21 to 23 October 2020.

6. Possible formats might include virtual meetings, using videoconferencing technology, as was used for the WHA and EB in May, as well as a "hybrid" format, where one delegation member of each Member State would participate in-person in a large meeting room, allowing physical distancing rules to be observed, while other delegation members participated virtually. Information on which format might be most suitable would be shared closer to the meeting dates.

7. The Bureau having agreed to the proposed dates, the next steps were outlined.

- A letter would be sent to the EB members inviting them to agree to the proposed meeting dates through a silence procedure. The Secretariat would aim to send out such a letter to the EB members next week, with a view to having the dates set before the opening of the first Regional Committee, which would be held on 25 August (AFRO).
- If any of the Board members were to signal in writing an objection to the proposed dates, then the proposed dates would not be adopted and alternative means would need to be sought for deciding on the dates, such as a special session of the Board.
- With regard to the format of the governing body meetings, another meeting of the EB Bureau would be proposed for the early autumn to discuss the options.

8. There being no further comments, the Chair closed the meeting.

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