

Standard operating procedures for extraordinary meetings of the Standing Committee pursuant to paragraph 8 of its terms of reference

1. In accordance with paragraph 8 of the terms of reference of the Standing Committee,¹ in the event a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) is determined pursuant to the International Health Regulations (2005), the Director-General shall convene an extraordinary meeting of the Standing Committee as soon as reasonably practicable, and ideally within 24 hours following the determination of the PHEIC.
2. Organizing a meeting of the governing bodies within 24 hours presents some practical challenges for both the Secretariat and Member States. To overcome these challenges, a set of standard operating procedures related to such extraordinary meetings are outlined below.

ANNOUNCING THE MEETING

3. When an International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee is convened to consider whether a public health event constitutes a PHEIC, members of the Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response will be informed by the Secretariat and provided with a tentative timeline for the relevant Emergency Committee's deliberations and an indication of when a possible extraordinary meeting of the Standing Committee could be convened if the Director-General determines that the public health event constitutes a public health emergency of international concern.

ATTENDANCE

4. Attendance will be in accordance with the terms of reference of the Standing Committee. The meetings of the Standing Committee shall be open for all Member States. Attendance of experts or observers will be determined by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee, in consultation with the Director-General.
5. It is understood that, as per the Executive Board's consistent practice, if any member of the Standing Committee is unable to attend, her or his successor or the alternate member of the Board designated by the government concerned, in accordance with Rule 2 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, will participate in the work of the Standing Committee.

¹ See document EB151/2022/REC/1, decision EB151(2) (2022).

INVITATIONS

6. As per usual practice, the Secretariat will issue the invitations to Member States through a circular letter. A template for invitations to extraordinary meetings of the Standing Committee has been prepared in advance and translated into the six official languages, such that it can be readily adapted and dispatched without delay in the event a public health emergency of international concern is determined (Annex 1).

MEETING FORMAT AND WORKING HOURS

7. Extraordinary meetings will be held in a virtual format. Working hours will accommodate, as much as possible, participation across different time zones.

REGISTRATION AND ACCESS

8. For meetings, which will all be virtual, all those who registered for the previous regular meeting of the Standing Committee, prior to the holding of the extraordinary meeting, will be automatically registered for the extraordinary meeting, unless otherwise indicated by the respective Member States within a specified deadline. Registered participants will receive a link via email to join the meeting on the virtual platform.

WORKING LANGUAGE

9. The meetings will be conducted in English only. However, interpretation into the other five official languages will be made available where possible. Documentation will be provided in English only.

AGENDA

10. The agenda of any extraordinary meeting of the Standing Committee convened in accordance with paragraph 8 of the terms of reference of the Standing Committee will be limited to matters bearing on the public health emergency of international concern at stake. It is envisioned that the provisional agenda of any extraordinary meetings so convened will include a briefing on the public health emergency of international concern, followed by a discussion. Other aspects, including the initial financing outlook, may also be presented (Annex 2).

MEETING OUTPUTS

11. In accordance with its terms of reference, the Standing Committee should provide guidance to the Executive Board and advice to the Director-General, through the Executive Board, including through a special session as needed, on matters regarding health emergency prevention, preparedness and response, and immediate capacities of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme.

12. A meeting report will be prepared and will contain any guidance to the Executive Board and advice to the Director-General. The meeting report will be considered by the Executive Board, which will be convened through a special session as needed.

ANNEX 1

**TEMPLATE FOR INVITATIONS TO EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS
OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE**

Ref.: C.L. XX.20XX

... The Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) presents his compliments to Member States and has the honour to transmit the provisional agenda for the XXX extraordinary meeting of the Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (SCHEPPRX), which will be held **in a virtual format**, on XX XXX 20XX, starting at XX:XX (CET).

This meeting is being convened in accordance with the terms of reference of the Standing Committee, following the determination of a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) related to *«insert name of PHEIC»*.

The membership of this Committee is as follows: XXXXXX.

A personalized zoom link to participate virtually will be sent to Member States. Member States who wish to revise their list of delegates may send an email to hqgoverningbodies@who.int ahead of the virtual meeting. To fast track the processing of requests, Member States are invited to list in the body of the email the delegate(s) who should be added or removed in the following format: email address, Member State and name (first name and surname of the delegate).

A note verbale is not required for the purposes of updating the list of delegates for virtual participation. In accordance with resolution WHA49.9 (1996) and to support the aim of achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), the Director-General invites Member States to consider that gender balance be applied to their delegations.

Documents pertaining to SCHEPPRX will be available at: <https://apps.who.int/gb/scheppr/>.

The WHO Director-General takes this opportunity to renew to Member States the assurance of his highest consideration.

GENEVA, X XXX 20XX

... ENCL.: (1)

ANNEX 2

**TEMPLATE FOR PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY
MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE**

Provisional agenda

1. **Opening of the meeting**
2. **Adoption of the agenda**
3. **Briefing on the ongoing public health emergency of international concern**
4. **Report of the meeting**
5. **Closure of the meeting**

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