Special rules and procedures

Decision

The Regional Committee,

Agreeing with the recommendation of the Thirtieth Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe to hold this third special session of the Regional Committee (RCSS3) in a virtual format, and having considered the report on special rules and procedures,¹

1. DECIDES to adopt the special rules and procedures set out in the Annex to this decision in order to regulate the conduct of the virtual session of the Regional Committee, which is convened pursuant to Rule 5 of its Rules of Procedure, and which opens on Monday, 15 May 2023 and closes no later than Monday, 15 May 2023.

Annex. Special rules and procedures
to regulate the conduct of the virtual special session
of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe

Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Europe

1. The Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Europe shall continue to apply in full, except
to the extent that they are inconsistent with these special rules and procedures, in which case the Regional
Committee’s decision to adopt these special rules and procedures shall operate as a decision to suspend
the relevant Rules of Procedure to the extent necessary in accordance with Rule 48 of the Rules of
Procedure of the Regional Committee for Europe.¹

Attendance

2. Attendance by Members,² invited States that are not members of the Regional Committee, invited
representatives of the United Nations, specialized agencies and other regional international organizations,
and non-State actors in official relations with WHO or accredited by the Regional Committee shall be
through secured access to the videoconferencing platform that has been identified for this session,
allowing representatives to hear other participants and to address the meeting remotely.

Credentials

3. In accordance with Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure, the names of Members’ representatives, in the
form of credentials, shall be communicated electronically to the WHO Regional Director for Europe before
the opening date of the special session of the Regional Committee.

4. In accordance with Rule 14.2.10 (h) of the Rules of Procedure, a subdivision of three members of the
Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe shall assess, before the opening of the special
session, whether the credentials of Members are in conformity with the requirements of the Rules of
Procedure, and shall report to the Regional Committee accordingly during the opening meeting with a view
to the Regional Committee making a decision thereon. The subdivision will assess whether credentials
received after the opening meeting are in conformity with the requirements of the Rules of Procedure and
will report immediately to the Regional Committee.

Public nature of the meetings

5. Consistent with Rule 6 of the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Europe, the virtual
session of the Regional Committee shall be held in public. In line with usual practice it will be broadcast on
the WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe) website.

Officers of the Regional Committee

6. In accordance with Rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Europe, the
officers and rapporteur elected by the Regional Committee for Europe at its 72nd session will hold office
for this special session of the Regional Committee, if available.

¹ This will affect notably the relevant provisions of the following Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for
Europe: Rule 41 (voting by show of hands).
² As per Rule 1 of the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Europe, the term “Members” includes
Member States and Associate Members in the WHO European Region.
Quorum

7. It is understood that virtual attendance of Members shall be taken into account when calculating the presence of a quorum in accordance with Rule 22 of the Rules of Procedure.

Addressing the Regional Committee

8. During the virtual special session, only Members shall be provided with the opportunity to take the floor. Individual statements will be limited to three minutes. Group statements will be limited to five minutes. Delegates wishing to take the floor should signal their wish to speak. Prerecorded video statements will not be allowed.

9. Members, invited States that are not members of the Regional Committee, invited representatives of the United Nations, specialized agencies and other regional international organizations, and non-State actors in official relations with WHO or accredited by the Regional Committee shall have the opportunity to submit written statements of no more than 600 words in one of the working languages of the Regional Committee for posting on the WHO/Europe website under the related agenda item. A written statement may be submitted in lieu of an oral intervention or to complement it.

10. Any such written statements, with the exception of those submitted in the exercise of a right of reply, may be submitted until the closure of the special session of the Regional Committee and shall remain posted on the WHO/Europe website in the language of submission until the adoption of the report of the special session. The content of the written statements will be summarized/reflected, in accordance with the usual practice, in the report of the special session.

11. Member States may provide translations of their submitted written statements into one or more of the working languages of the Regional Committee, if they so wish. Such translations shall be posted alongside the submitted written statement and shall be clearly marked with the words “unofficial translation”.

12. Consistent with Rule 25 and Rule 26 bis, any Member wishing to raise a point of order or exercise a right of reply in relation to an oral statement made at the Regional Committee should signal its intention to do so. It is understood that, in accordance with well established practice, any right of reply to such a statement shall be exercised at the end of the meeting.

13. Any Member wishing to exercise a right of reply in relation to a written statement should do so in writing as soon as possible and, in any case, no later than five working days after the closure of the relevant virtual session. Any Member wishing to exercise a right of reply in relation to a written statement submitted in reply to its previous written statement should do so in writing as soon as possible and, in any case, no later than five working days after the posting of the statement in reply. Any Member wishing to exercise a further right of reply in relation to a written statement submitted in reply to its previous written statement should do so in writing as soon as possible and, in any case, no later than five working days after the posting of the statement in reply. Written statements submitted in the exercise of a right of reply shall remain posted on the WHO/Europe website in the language of submission until the adoption of the report of the session. The content of statements thus submitted will be summarized/reflected, in accordance with the usual practice, in the report of the special session.

Decision-making

14. All decisions of the Regional Committee taken during its special session should, as far as possible, be taken by consensus.

15. In the event that a vote is required, voting shall take place by show of hand, except if any representative would request a roll-call. Members shall be invited by the presiding officer to use the “raise hand” feature of the videoconferencing platform that was identified for this session.
16. In the event that a roll-call is requested, 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 roll-call, the delegation shall be recorded as absent.

17. Brief statements consisting of explanations of vote may, if not made orally, be submitted in writing
no later than three working days following the closure of the virtual special session. The content of the
statements consisting of the explanations of vote will be summarized/ reflected, in accordance with the
usual practice, in the report of the special session.