

Process for the election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization: candidates' forums, nomination by the Executive Board

Report by the Secretariat

1. In accordance with Rule 62 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board as well as resolution WHA66.18 (2013), as amended by decision WHA73(27) (2020), two candidates' forums, open to all Member States and Associate Members, will be convened by the Secretariat as standalone events to enable each of the candidates to make themselves and their vision known to Member States.
2. The first candidates' forum will be held prior to the session of the Board at which the nomination of candidates for the post of Director-General will take place. The second candidates' forum will be held prior to the session of the World Health Assembly at which the appointment of the Director-General will take place.
3. The candidates' forums will not be convened in the event that there is only one candidate for the post of Director-General.¹

DATES OF THE CANDIDATES' FORUMS

4. With respect to the dates and duration of the candidates' forums, the Health Assembly decided that: the dates of the forums will be decided by the Board at its session preceding that at which the nomination will take place; the candidates' forums will last no more than three days; and the Officers of the Board will decide the exact duration of the forums depending on the number of candidates.² In any event, the first forum should be held no later than two months before the opening of the Board and the second should be held no later than two months before the opening of the Health Assembly.³
5. Accordingly:
 - (a) Should the Board agree with the proposal contained in document EB149/11 that the 150th session of the Executive Board be convened on 24 January 2022, the first candidates' forum

¹ In accordance with Rule 62 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, as amended by the Board through decision EB147(12) (2020).

² See decision WHA73(27) (2020), Annex 2, paragraph 3.

³ Rule 62 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, as amended by the Board through decision EB147(12) (2020).

should be held no later than 23 November 2021. It is therefore proposed to convene the first candidates' forum starting on 22 November 2021.

(b) Should the Board agree with the proposal contained in document EB149/11 that the Seventy-fifth World Health Assembly be convened on 23 May 2022, the second candidates' forum should be held no later than 22 March 2022. It is therefore proposed that the second candidates' forum will start on 16 March 2022.

INTERVIEW MODALITIES AT THE FIRST CANDIDATES' FORUM

6. In accordance with Annex 2 of decision WHA73(27) (2020), the first candidates' forum will consist of interviews with candidates. Each candidate will make a presentation of up to 10 minutes, to be followed by a question-and-answer session, amounting to an overall duration of each interview of 60 minutes. The order of the interviews will be determined by lot. In the same decision, the Health Assembly provided that detailed arrangements for the interviews may be decided either by the Board at its session preceding the event, or by the Member States and Associate Members attending the forum, at the proposal of the Chair of the Board.

7. Draft detailed arrangements covering residual aspects in relation to the conduct of the interviews at the first candidates' forum were presented to the Board at its 148th session,¹ to facilitate a decision on the matter by the Board at its 149th session. The Board will therefore be invited to consider the detailed arrangements for the interviews at the first candidates' forum, set out in the Annex to this report, and to decide that, in the event that participants physically attend the first candidates' forum, these detailed arrangements will apply to the interviews of candidates.

TRAVEL SUPPORT TO CANDIDATE(S) ATTENDING THE INTERVIEWS AT THE 150TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

8. During the last election of the Director-General, travel support was provided, upon request, to all candidates attending the interviews at the session of the Board at which the nomination took place. On that occasion, based on WHO's travel policy, travel support consisted of an economy class airline ticket and a per diem for the time necessary for the interview. The Secretariat intends to provide the same level of support to candidates who will attend the interviews at the 150th session of the Board, at which the nomination will take place.

CLARIFICATIONS RELATED TO THE NOMINATION PHASE DURING THE 150TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

9. With regard to the nomination of candidate(s) at the 150th session of the Executive Board, the Board's attention is drawn to two issues below.

(i) First, with respect to the shortlisting phase, decision EB100(7) (1997) provides that "any candidates not having received a minimum proportion of the votes cast (set at 10% of the ballot papers)" would be eliminated. During the last election of the Director-General, the Board agreed to interpret the terms "votes cast" and "ballot papers" as referring to "members present and

¹ Document EB148/38.

voting”, in accordance with Rule 48 (then Rule 42) of the Rules of Procedure.¹ The Secretariat used that interpretation when calculating 10% for the application of the Rule.

(ii) Secondly, in the nomination phase, while there are only three places on the nomination list, more than three candidates may secure the simple majority of Members present and voting required by the Rules of Procedure in the first round of voting. In the absence of clear instructions governing such situations in the Rules, during the last election of the Director-General the Board agreed to follow the interpretation set out in the United Nations model rules if such a situation arose.²

10. In light of this practice, the Executive Board is invited to decide that the interpretations recalled above shall be applied, if applicable, during the nomination of candidate(s) at the 150th session of the Executive Board and at any subsequent nominations.

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

11. The Board is invited to take note of the report and to consider the following draft decision:

The Executive Board, having considered the report on the process for the election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization,³ decided that:

- (1) in the event that more than one candidate is proposed for the post of Director-General, the first candidates’ forum shall be held starting on 22 November 2021 for a duration that shall be further decided by the Officers of the Board depending on the number of candidates; and the second candidates’ forum shall be held starting on 16 March 2022 for a duration that shall be further decided by the Officers of the Board depending on the number of nominated candidates;
- (2) the interviews of candidates at the first candidates’ forum shall be conducted in accordance with the detailed arrangements set out in the Annex to this decision;
- (3) the interpretations recalled in paragraph 9 of document EB149/4 shall be applied, if applicable, during the nomination of candidate(s) that will take place at the 150th session of the Executive Board and any subsequent nominations.

¹ Summary records of the 139th session of the Executive Board, third meeting, section 2.

² Summary records of the 139th session of the Executive Board, third meeting, section 2. The Model Rules provide that, “When one or more elective places are to be filled at one time under the same conditions, each delegation entitled to vote may cast a vote for as many candidates as there are places to be filled, and those candidates, in a number not exceeding the number of such places, obtaining in the first ballot a majority of the votes cast and the largest number of votes shall be elected.”

³ Document EB149/4.

ANNEX

**DETAILED ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS
AT THE FIRST CANDIDATES' FORUM**

Seating arrangements

1. In the event that participants physically attend the candidates' forum, participants from Member States and Associate Members will be invited to take seats in the Executive Board Room according to their respective regional membership.

Presentation by candidates

2. The presentation by each candidate shall not exceed 10 minutes. Visual aids, including electronic presentation tools, shall not be used.

Selection of questions

3. Each Member State and Associate Member present at the candidates' forum will be given colour-coded tokens, one for each candidate to be interviewed, bearing the Member's name. Member States and Associate Members present will be invited to indicate if they wish to ask a question by placing their token(s) in one of six receptacles (one for each). Once all tokens have been collected by the Secretariat, the Chair will pull one token from each receptacle, following the order of regions that he or she has previously determined by lot. After six questions, one from each region, have been asked, the contents of the six receptacles will be merged into one and the selection of those invited to ask questions will continue, one-by-one, on a fully random basis until the time available for each candidate has been exhausted.

Questions and answers

4. Member States and Associate Members will have up to one minute to ask one question only. Multiple-part questions will not be permitted. Candidates will have up to three minutes to respond to each question. Each interview will conclude after 60 minutes have elapsed, even if there are still questions pending. A candidate will, however, be permitted to complete his or her answer to the question being addressed when the 60 minutes elapse. Should there still be time available when the questions have been exhausted, the candidate may, if he or she wishes, make additional remarks within the remaining time.

Timekeeping

5. It is expected that a traffic light system or other electronic timekeeping system will be used to help participants to keep within the time limits during both parts of the interview.

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