

Rules of Procedure of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia

*(As revised by the Regional Committee
at its Seventieth session in September 2017)*



September 2017

I. Membership and attendance

Rule 1

The Regional Committee (hereinafter referred to as the "Committee") shall consist of representatives (hereinafter referred to as "the representatives"), one each from the Member States (hereinafter referred to as "the Members") forming the South-East Asia Region (hereinafter referred to as "the Region") of the World Health Organization (hereinafter referred to as "the Organization"). The representatives may be accompanied by alternates and advisers.

Rule 2

Subject to the terms of any existing agreements, the Committee may arrange for consultation with the respective regional committees of the United Nations and with those of other specialized agencies and with other regional international organizations having interests in common with the Organization and for their participation, without vote, in its discussions. The Regional Director (hereinafter referred to as "the Director"), in consultation with Member States, may invite States that are not members of the Committee to participate, without vote, in the sessions of the Committee. The Director, in consultation with Member States, may also invite nongovernmental organizations to participate in the deliberations of the Committee as provided in section 5 of the 'Principles governing relations between the World Health Organization and nongovernmental organizations'.

II. Credentials

Rule 3

The Members shall communicate to the Director, not less than 15 days before the date fixed for the opening of the session of the Committee, the names of their representatives, including all alternates and advisers. Similarly, the organizations and States referred to in Rule 2 invited to be represented at the session shall communicate the names of the persons by whom they will be represented.

The credentials of representatives, including all alternates and advisers, shall be submitted to the Director, if possible not less than one day before the opening of the session of the Committee. Such credentials shall be issued by one of the following: the Head of State, the Head of Government, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Health or any other equivalent authority.

Rule 3 bis

The officers of the Committee shall examine the credentials and report thereon to the Committee. Any representative to whose admission a Member has made an objection shall be seated provisionally with the same rights as other representatives, until the officers have reported and the Committee has given its decision.

III. Sessions

Rule 4

The Committee shall hold at least one session a year. It shall determine at each session the time and place of its next session. Notices convening the Committee shall be sent by the Director at least six weeks before the commencement of the session to the Members, to the Director-General of the Organization (hereinafter referred to as "the Director-General"), and to the organizations referred to in Rule 2 invited to be represented at the session.

Rule 5

The Director, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, shall also convene the Committee at the joint request of any three Members, addressed to him in writing and stating the reason for the request. In this case, the Committee shall be convened within thirty days following receipt of the request, and the session shall be held at the Regional Headquarters unless the Director, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, determines otherwise. The agenda of such a session shall be limited to the questions having necessitated that session.

Rule 6

The meetings of the Committee shall be held in public, unless the Committee decides otherwise.

IV. Agenda

Rule 7

The provisional agenda of each session shall be drawn up by the Director, in consultation with the Chairman. It shall be despatched together with the notice of convocation, to be sent in accordance with Rule 4 or Rule 5, as the case may be.

Rule 8

Except in the case of sessions convened under Rule 5, the provisional agenda of each session shall include, *inter alia*:

- (a) all items the inclusion of which has been prescribed by the World Health Assembly (hereinafter referred to as "the Health Assembly");
- (b) all items the inclusion of which has been prescribed by the Executive Board of the Organization;

- (c) any item proposed by the Director-General;
- (d) any item proposed by a Member in the Region.

Proposals under item (d) above should be received by the Director at least eight weeks prior to the commencement of the session.

Rule 9

Subject to the provisions of Rule 5, the Director may, in consultation with the Chairman, include any question suitable for the agenda which may arise between the despatch of the provisional agenda and the opening day of the session in a supplementary agenda, which the Committee shall examine together with the provisional agenda.

V. Officers of the Committee

Rule 10

The Committee shall elect its officers, a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman, from among the representatives each year at its first session held during that year. The officers shall hold office until their successors are elected. The Chairman shall not become eligible for re-election until two years have elapsed since he ceased to hold office.

Rule 11

In addition to exercising the powers which are conferred upon him elsewhere by these rules, the Chairman shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting of the Committee, shall direct the discussions, ensure observance of these rules, accord the right to speak, put questions and announce decisions. He shall rule on points of order and, subject to these rules, shall control the proceedings at any meeting and shall maintain order thereat. The Chairman may, in the course of the discussion of any item, propose to the Committee the limitation of the time to be allowed to each speaker or the closure of the list of speakers.

Rule 12

If the Chairman is absent from a meeting or any part thereof, the Vice-Chairman shall preside. The same procedure shall be adopted when the Chairman is unable to attend a session of the Committee.

In the event that neither the Chairman nor the Vice-Chairman is present at the opening of a session, the Regional Director shall preside *ad interim* until the election of a Chairman.

Rule 13

If the Chairman for any reason is unable to complete his term of office, the Vice-Chairman shall act as Chairman until the election of a new Chairman.

Rule 14

The Chairman, or the Vice-Chairman acting as Chairman, shall not vote, but he may, if necessary, appoint another representative or alternate representative from his delegation to act as representative of his government.

VI. Sub-committees of the Committee

Rule 15

The Committee may establish such sub-committees as it may deem necessary for the study of and report on any item on its agenda.

The Committee shall review from time to time, and in any case once a year, the need to maintain any sub-committee established under its authority.

VII. Secretariat

Rule 16

The Director shall act as the Secretary of the Committee and of any sub-division thereof. He may delegate these functions.

Rule 17

The Director shall report to the Committee on the technical, administrative and financial implications, if any, of all agenda items submitted to the Committee.

Rule 18

The Director, or a member of the Secretariat designated by him, may at any time make either oral or written statements concerning any question under consideration.

Rule 19

The Secretariat shall prepare a summary report of the session reflecting the discussions on the various agenda items and containing the resolutions adopted. The report shall be prepared in English and adopted prior to the closure of the session. Sound recordings of the plenary meetings of the Regional Committee shall also be made. Such recordings of the whole or part of the session shall be kept for ten years and made available to Member States on request.

Rule 20

All resolutions, recommendations and other important decisions of the Committee shall be communicated by the Director to the representatives, to all Members of the Region and to the Director-General.

VIII. Languages

Rule 21

English shall be the working language of the Committee.

Rule 22

Any delegate may speak in a language other than the official language. In this case, he shall himself provide for interpretation into English.

IX. Conduct of business

Rule 23

A majority of the Members shall constitute a quorum.

Rule 24

No representative may address the Committee without having previously obtained the permission of the Chairman. The Chairman shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak. The Chairman may call a speaker to order if his remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

Rule 25

Any representative may at any time request his alternate, designated in accordance with Rule 3, to speak and vote on his behalf on any question. Moreover, upon the request of the representative or his, alternate, the Chairman may allow an adviser to speak on any particular point, but the latter shall not have the right to vote.

Rule 26

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may rise to a point of order, and the point of order shall be immediately decided by the Chairman. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the Chairman, in which case the appeal shall immediately be put to the vote. A representative rising to a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion but on the point of order only.

Rule 27

During the course of a debate the Chairman may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Committee, declare the list closed. He may, however, accord the right of reply to any representative if in his opinion a speech delivered after he has declared the list closed makes it desirable.

Rule 28

During the discussion on any matter, a representative may move the suspension or adjournment of the meeting. Such motions shall not be debated but shall be immediately put to the vote.

For the purpose of these Rules, "suspension of the meeting" means the temporary postponement of the business of the meeting, and "adjournment of the meeting" means the termination of all business until another meeting is called.

Rule 29

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, one speaker may speak in favour of, and one against, the motion, after which the motion to adjourn the debate shall be immediately put to the vote.

Rule 30

A representative may at any time move the closure of the debate on the item under discussion, whether or not any other representative has signified his wish to speak. If a request is made for permission to speak against the closure, it may be accorded to not more than two representatives, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. If the Committee decides in favour of the closure, the Chairman shall declare the debate closed.

Rule 31

The following motions shall have precedence, in the order indicated below, over all other proposals or motions before the meeting except a motion on a point of order:

- (a) to suspend the meeting;
- (b) to adjourn the meeting;
- (c) to adjourn the debate on the item under discussion, and
- (d) for the closure of the debate on the item under discussion.

Rule 32

Subject to Rule 31, any motion calling for a decision on the competence of the Committee to adopt a proposal submitted to it shall be put to the vote before a vote is taken on the proposal in question.

Rule 33

A representative may move that parts of a proposal or of an amendment shall be voted on separately. If objection is made to the request for division, the motion for division shall be voted upon. Permission to speak on the motion for division shall be given only to two speakers in favour and two speakers against. If the motion for division is carried, those parts of the proposal or of the amendment which are subsequently approved shall be put to the vote as a whole. If all operative parts of the proposal or the amendment have been rejected, the proposal or the amendment shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

Rule 34

When an amendment to a proposal is moved, the amendment shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments to a proposal are moved, the Committee shall first vote on the amendment deemed by the Chairman to be furthest removed in substance from the original proposal, and then on the amendment next removed therefrom, and so on, until all the amendments have been put to the vote. Where, however, the adoption of one amendment necessarily implies the rejection of another amendment, the latter amendment shall not be put to the vote. If one or more amendments are adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted upon.

A motion is considered an amendment to a proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of that proposal. A motion which constitutes a substitution for a proposal shall be considered as a proposal.

Rule 35

If two or more proposals are moved, the Committee shall first vote on the proposal deemed by the Chairman to be furthest removed in substance from the proposal first presented, and then on the proposal next removed therefrom, and so on, until all the proposals have been put to the vote, unless the result of a vote

on a proposal makes unnecessary any other voting on the proposal or proposals still outstanding.

Rule 36

A motion may be withdrawn by its proposer at any time before voting on it has commenced, provided that the motion has not been amended, or, if amended, that the proposer of the amendment agrees to the withdrawal. A motion thus withdrawn may be re-introduced by any representative.

Rule 37

When a proposal has been adopted or rejected it may not be reconsidered at the same session of the Committee, unless the Committee, by a two-thirds majority of representatives present and voting, so decides. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider shall be accorded only to two speakers opposing the motion, after which it shall be immediately put to the vote.

Rule 38

The Chairman may at any time require any proposal, motion, resolution or amendment to be seconded.

X. Voting

Rule 39

Each representative entitled to vote shall have one vote. For the purpose of these Rules, the phrase "representatives present and voting" means representatives casting an affirmative or negative vote. Representatives abstaining from voting are considered as not voting. In a secret ballot all invalid votes shall be so reported to the Committee and shall be counted as abstentions.

Rule 40

Except as otherwise provided by the Constitution of the Organization or decided by the Health Assembly, the decisions of the Committee shall be made by a majority of the representatives present and voting.

Rule 41

If the votes are equally divided on a matter other than an election, the proposal shall be regarded as not adopted.

Rule 42

The Committee shall normally vote by show of hands, except that any representative may request a roll-call, which shall then be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the Members.

Rule 43

After the Chairman has announced the beginning of voting, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of voting.

Rule 44

The vote of each representative participating in any roll-call shall be inserted in the records.

Rule 45

Elections shall normally be held by secret ballot. However, except as concerns the nomination of the Director, if the number of candidates for elective office does not exceed the number of offices to be filled, no ballot shall be required, and such candidates shall be declared elected. Where ballots are required, two tellers appointed by the Chairman from among the representatives shall assist in the counting of votes. The nomination of the Director shall be decided by secret ballot in accordance with Rule 49.

Rule 46

In addition to the cases provided for elsewhere by these Rules, the Committee may vote on any matter by secret ballot if it has previously so decided by a majority of the representatives present and voting, provided that no secret ballot may be taken on budgetary questions.

A decision under this rule by the Committee whether or not to vote by secret ballot may only be taken by a show of hands; if the Committee has decided to vote on a particular question by secret ballot, no other mode of voting may be requested or decided upon.

Rule 47

Subject to the provisions of Rule 49, when only one elective place is to be filled and no candidate obtains in the first ballot the majority required, a second ballot shall be taken which shall be restricted to the two candidates obtaining the largest number of votes; if in the second ballot the votes are equally divided, the Chairman shall decide between the candidates by drawing lots.

Rule 48

When two or more elective places are to be filled at one time under the same conditions, those candidates obtaining in the first ballot the majority required shall be elected. If the number of candidates obtaining such majority is less than the number of places to be filled, there shall be as many additional ballots as are necessary to fill the remaining places, the ballots being restricted to the candidates obtaining the greatest number of votes in the previous ballot to a number not more than twice the places remaining to be filled.

XI. Nomination of Regional Director

Rule 49

- (a) Not less than six months before the date fixed for the opening of a session of the Committee at which a person is due to be nominated as Regional Director, the Director-General shall inform each Member of the Region that

he will receive proposals of names of candidates for nomination by the Committee as Regional Director.

- (b) Any Member of the Region may propose the name of one person from within the Region who has indicated willingness to act as Regional Director, submitting with the proposal particulars of the person's qualifications and experience. Member States shall be mindful of the Code of Conduct adopted by the Regional Committee and shall bring it to the attention of such persons. Such proposals shall be sent to the Director-General so as to reach him/her not less than twelve weeks before the date fixed for the opening of the session.
- (c) A person holding office as Regional Director for the Region shall, if he is eligible and has so requested the Director-General, be a candidate for nomination without being proposed under the preceding paragraph.
- (d) The Director-General shall, not less than ten weeks before the date fixed for the opening of the session, cause copies of all proposals for nomination as Regional Director (with particulars of qualifications and experience) received by him within the period specified, to be sent to each Member of the Region. The Director-General shall also indicate to each Member whether or not the person holding the office is a candidate for nomination.
- (e) If no proposals have been received by the Director-General in time for transmission to Members in accordance with this rule, Members shall be informed accordingly not less than ten weeks before the opening of the session of the Committee. The Committee shall itself establish a list of candidates composed of the names proposed in secret by the representatives present and entitled to vote.
- (f) The procedure laid down in the second sentence of paragraph (e) above shall also apply in cases where the post of Regional Director falls vacant within the period of six months laid down in paragraph (a) of this rule.
- (g) The persons proposed in accordance with paragraph (b) of this rule shall be invited to make a presentation at a private meeting of the Committee. The presentation shall consist of an oral statement by each candidate; in addition members of the Committee may make requests for clarifications. The Committee shall determine, as appropriate, modalities for the presentations.

- (h) The nomination of the Regional Director shall take place at a private meeting of the Committee. The Committee shall make a selection by secret ballot from among the persons who are candidates under this rule.
- (i) For this purpose each representative entitled to vote shall write on his ballot paper the name of a single candidate chosen from the above-mentioned list. If no candidate obtains the majority required (see Rule 40), the candidate who obtains the least number of votes shall be eliminated at each ballot. If the number of candidates is reduced to two, there shall be as many ballots as are necessary in order to secure a majority for either candidate. In the event of a tie between the remaining candidates after three such ballots, the whole procedure established by this Rule shall be re-commenced.
- (j) The name of the person so nominated shall be submitted to the Executive Board.

XII. Suspension and amendment of Rules of Procedure

Rule 50

Subject to the provisions of the Constitution of the Organization, any of these rules may be suspended by the Committee provided that at least forty-eight hours notice of the proposal for such suspension has been given to the Chairman and communicated by him to the representatives twenty-four hours before the meeting at which the proposal is to be submitted. If, however, on the advice of the Chairman, the Committee is unanimously in favour of such a proposal, it may adopt it immediately and without notice.

Rule 51

Amendments of or additions to these rules may be adopted by the Committee, provided that the Committee has received and considered a report thereon by an appropriate sub-committee.

XIII. General provisions

Rule 52

The Committee may at its discretion apply such Rules of Procedure of the Health Assembly or of the Executive Board of the Organization as it may deem appropriate to particular circumstances.