

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

**as revised at the sixteenth, twenty-sixth,
twenty-eighth, fifty-third and sixty-third sessions
of the Committee on 16 September 1966,
11 September 1976, 25 September 1978,
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respectively.**

**Pour le texte français, voir pages papier bleu.
Texto português, ver as páginas cor-de-rosa.**

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RULES OF PROCEDURE OF
THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

I. MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

Rule 1

The Regional Committee for Africa (hereafter referred to as the “Committee”) shall consist of representatives (hereafter referred to as the “representatives”), one from each of the Member States and Associate Members of the African Region (hereafter referred to as the “Region”) of the World Health Organization (hereafter referred to as the “Organization”). The representatives may be accompanied by alternates and advisers.

Rule 2

Subject to the terms of existing agreements, the Committee may arrange for consultation with respective Committees of the United Nations and its specialized agencies; and with other regional international organizations and economic communities having interests in common with the World Health Organization and for their participation, without vote, in its discussions. The Committee may invite States from other regions as well as nongovernmental organizations to participate without vote in the sessions of the Committee. Nongovernmental organizations shall participate in accordance with the principles adopted by the Health Assembly.

II. CREDENTIALS

Rule 3

- (a) The Members shall communicate to the Regional Director if possible fifteen days before the date fixed for the opening of the session of the Committee, the names of their representatives, including all alternates, advisers and secretaries. Similarly, the organizations referred to in Rule 2, invited to be represented at the session, shall communicate the names of the persons by whom they shall be represented.
- (b) The credentials of representatives of Members and Associate Members shall be delivered to the Regional Director, if possible not less than one day before the opening of the session of the Committee. Such credentials shall be issued by the Head of State, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Health or any other appropriate authority.
- (c) A Committee on Credentials consisting of representatives of seven Member States shall be appointed at the beginning of each session by the Committee on the proposal of the Chairperson. The Committee shall elect its own officers. It shall examine the credentials of representatives of Member States and Associate Members and report to the Committee thereafter. Any representative to whose admission a Member State has made objection shall be seated provisionally with the same rights as other representatives, until the Credentials Committee has reported and the Committee has given its decision. The Chairperson of the Credentials Committee shall be empowered to recommend to the Committee on behalf of the Credentials Committee the acceptance of the formal credentials of representatives seated on the basis of provisional credentials already accepted by the Committee. Meetings of the Credentials Committee shall be held in private.

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 Regional Director at least six weeks before the commencement of the session to the Members and the Associate Members, to the WHO Director-General (hereafter 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 Regional Director, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Committee shall, if necessary, also convene the Committee at the joint request of any ten Members; such request shall be addressed to the Regional Director in writing and shall state the reason for the request. In this case, the Committee shall be convened within thirty days of receipt of the request and the session shall be held at the WHO Regional Office unless the Regional Director, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Committee, determines otherwise. The agenda of such a session shall be limited to the issue(s) having necessitated that session.

The Chairperson of the Committee may convene an ad hoc session for purposes of nominating a Regional Director in the event that the post falls vacant unexpectedly in between sessions.

Rule 6

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 Regional Director in consultation with the Chairperson. It shall be dispatched together with the notice of convocation to be sent in accordance with the 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 (hereafter 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 or an Associate Member of the Region.

Rule 9

Subject to the provisions of Rule 5, the Regional Director may, in consultation with the Chairperson, include any question suitable for the agenda which may arise on 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, comprising a Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons, 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 Chairperson shall not become eligible for re-election until two years have elapsed since ceasing to hold office.

Rule 11

In addition to the powers conferred upon him/her under other provisions of these Rules, the Chairperson shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting of the Committee, direct the discussions, ensure observance of these Rules, accord the right to speak, put issues to the vote and announce decisions. He/She shall rule on points of order and, subject to these Rules, control the proceedings at all meetings and maintain order thereat. The Chairperson may, in the course of the discussion of any item, propose to the Committee the time limit allowed for each speaker or the closure of the list of speakers.

Rule 12

If the Chairperson is absent from a session or a meeting or any part thereof, he/she shall designate one of the Vice-Chairpersons to preside over that session or that meeting. If the Chairperson is unable to make this designation, the Committee shall appoint one of the Vice-Chairpersons to preside over the session or the meeting.

If neither the Chairperson nor the Vice-Chairpersons is available to preside over a session or a meeting, the Committee shall designate a Deputy-Chairperson to preside over the deliberations.

Rule 13

If the Chairperson, for any reason, is unable to complete his/her term of office, one of the Vice-Chairpersons shall act in his/her place. The order in which the Vice-Chairpersons shall be requested to serve shall be determined by lot at the session at which the election takes place.

Rule 14

The Chairperson or a Vice-Chairperson acting as Chairperson shall not vote but may, if necessary, appoint another representative or an alternate from his/her delegation to act as representative of his/her government.

VI. RAPPORTEURS

Rule 15

The Committee shall elect one or more Rapporteurs whose functions shall be to prepare and present the report of the meetings of the Committee.

VII. SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE COMMITTEE

Rule 16

The Committee may establish such subcommittees as it may deem necessary to study, and report on, any item on its agenda. The Committee shall, from time to time, but at least once a year, re-assess the need to maintain any subcommittees established under its authority.

VIII. SECRETARIAT

Rule 17

The Regional Director shall act as the Secretary to the Committee and of any subdivision thereof. He/she may delegate these functions.

Rule 18

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

Rule 19

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

Rule 20

The Secretariat shall, in close collaboration with the rapporteurs and other representatives of the Member States, prepare the final report of the Committee in the working languages for adoption before the end of every session.

Rule 21

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

IX. LANGUAGES

Rule 22

English, French and Portuguese shall be the working languages of the Committee.

Rule 23

Speeches made in one of the working languages shall be interpreted into the other working languages and, if a Member or Associate Member so requests in sufficient time before a session of the Committee, also into Spanish. This provision shall apply, in like manner, to interpretation into the working languages of speeches made in Spanish.

Rule 24

Any representative may speak in a language other than the working languages. In that event, the representative concerned shall provide for interpretation into any one of the working languages. Interpretation shall then be done into the other working languages by an interpreter of the Secretariat, based on the interpretation given in the first working language.

Rule 25

All resolutions, recommendations and other important decisions of the Committee shall be written in the working languages.

X. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Rule 26

A Majority of the Members shall constitute a quorum.

Rule 27

No representative shall address the Committee meeting without the permission of the Chairperson. The Chairperson shall give the floor to speakers in the order in which they express their desire to speak. The Chairperson may call a speaker to order if his/her remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

Rule 28

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

Rule 29

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may raise a point of order and the point of order shall immediately be decided upon by the Chairperson. A representative may appeal against the decision of the Chairperson in which case the appeal shall immediately be put to the vote. A representative raising a point of order shall not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion but on the point of order only.

Rule 30

In the course of the deliberations, the Chairperson may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Committee, declare the list closed. He/she may, however, accord the right of reply to any representative if, in his/her opinion, a statement made after he/she has declared the list closed makes that desirable.

Rule 31

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the suspension or the 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 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 32

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the adjournment of the deliberations on the item under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, one speaker may second the motion, and another speaker may object to it, after which the motion to adjourn the debate shall be immediately put to the vote.

Rule 33

A representative may, at any time, bring a motion to close deliberations on an item under discussion whether or not any other representative had expressed a wish to speak. If a request is made for permission to speak against the closure, the permission 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 closure, the Chairperson shall declare the debate closed.

Rule 34

With the exception of a point of order, the following motions shall have precedence, in the following order, over all other proposals or motions before the meeting:

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

Rule 35

Subject to Rule 34, 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 36

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

Rule 37

When an amendment to a proposal is tabled, the amendment shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments to a proposal are tabled, the Committee shall first vote on the amendment deemed by the Chairman to be most unrelated in substance to the original proposal and then on the amendment next unrelated thereto, 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 as 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 itself be considered as a proposal.

Rule 38

If two or more proposals are moved, the Committee shall, unless it decides otherwise, vote on the proposals in the order in which they have been circulated to all delegations, unless the result of a vote on a proposal makes unnecessary any other voting on the proposal or proposals still outstanding.

Rule 39

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 reintroduced by any representative.

Rule 40

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

Rule 41

The Chairperson may, at any time, demand that a proposal, motion, resolution or amendment be seconded.

XI. VOTING

Rule 42

Each representative 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 43

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

Rule 44

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

Rule 45

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

Rule 46

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

Rule 47

After the Chairperson 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 48

Elections shall normally be held by secret ballot. However, except as concerns the nomination of the Regional Director, if the number of candidates for elective office does not exceed the number of the offices to be filled, no ballot shall be required and such candidates shall be declared elected. Where ballots are required, two polling officers appointed by the Chairperson from among the representatives shall assist in the counting of votes. The nomination of the Regional Director shall be decided by secret ballot in accordance with Rule 52.

Rule 49

Except as otherwise provided under these Rules of Procedure, the Committee may vote on any matter by secret ballot if it has been so decided beforehand by the majority of the representatives present and voting provided that no secret ballot shall be taken on budgetary matters.

A decision by the Committee under this Rule whether or not to hold a secret ballot shall be taken only by a show of hands; should the Committee decide to vote on a particular question by secret ballot, no other mode of voting shall be requested or decided upon.

Rule 50

Subject to the provisions of Rule 52, if only one elective post is to be filled and no candidate obtains in the first ballot a majority of votes cast by those entitled to vote, a second ballot shall be taken and shall be restricted to the two candidates having obtained the largest number of votes; if in the second ballot the votes are equally divided, the Chairperson shall decide between the candidates by drawing lots.

Rule 51

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

Rule 52

1. Not less than six months before the date fixed for the opening of a session of the Committee at which the Regional Director is to be nominated, the Director-General shall inform each Member State that he/she will receive proposals for the names of persons for nomination by the Committee for the post of Regional Director.
2. Any Member State may propose for the post of Regional Director the names of one suitably qualified and experienced citizen of that State with a medical background, by submitting with the proposal

a curriculum vitae and other supporting information of not more than 2000 words (statement of vision, priorities and strategies). Such proposals shall be sent to the Director-General, including in electronic format, so as to reach him/her at the Headquarters of the Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, not less than twelve weeks before the date fixed for the opening of the session.

3. If the incumbent Regional Director is available and eligible for reappointment in accordance with Rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, the Director-General shall inform each Member accordingly at the time when he/she invites proposals for names of nominees for the post of Regional Director. The name of the Regional Director in office thus available shall automatically be submitted to the Committee and shall not require a proposal from any Member.
4. The Director-General shall, not less than ten weeks before the date fixed for the opening of the session of the Committee, cause copies of all proposals for nomination for the post of Regional Director (with the curriculum vitae of each person and other supporting information) received by him/her within the period specified to be sent to each Member under confidential cover.
5. If no proposals have been received by the Director-General in time for transmission to Member States in accordance with this Rule, Member States 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 voting.

6. If the Director-General receives more than five candidatures within the period specified in paragraph 2, the Committee shall draw a short list of five candidates at the commencement of its session. For this purpose, the Committee shall hold a secret ballot, and the five candidates obtaining the highest number of votes shall make up the short list. In the event of a tie between two or more persons such that there are more than five persons identified for inclusion on the short list, there shall be additional ballots between those persons receiving the tie votes, with those receiving the highest number of votes filling the remaining place or places on the shortlist.
7. The persons referred to in paragraph 2 or 3 or— in the case of paragraph 6 being applicable—those persons on the shortlist, shall be interviewed by the Committee in a private meeting. The interview shall consist of a presentation by each candidate in addition to answers to questions from Members of the Committee. The Committee shall determine, as appropriate, the modalities for the interviews.
8. The nomination of the Regional Director shall take place in a private meeting of the Committee. The Committee shall make a selection by secret ballot from among the persons referred to in paragraphs 2 or 3 or—in the case of paragraph 6 being applicable—those persons on the shortlist, in the following manner:
 - (a) Each representative entitled to vote shall write on the ballot paper the name of a single candidate.
 - (b) The candidate who obtains at a ballot the majority required shall be declared nominated.

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- (c) At a ballot when no candidate obtains the majority required, the candidate who obtains the least number of votes shall be eliminated.
 - (d) When the number of candidates is reduced to two, there shall be as many ballots as are necessary to secure the majority for either candidate.
 - (e) In the event of a tie between the two remaining candidates after three such ballots, the established procedure shall be recommenced on the basis of the original list of candidates.
9. The name of the person so nominated shall be submitted to the Executive Board.

XII. SUSPENSION AND AMENDMENT OF RULES OF PROCEDURE

Rule 53

Subject to the provisions of the WHO Constitution, 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 Chairperson and communicated by him/her to the representatives twenty-four hours before the meeting at which the proposal is to be submitted. If, however, on the advice of the Chairperson, the Committee is unanimously in favour of such a proposal, it may adopt it immediately and without notice.

Rule 54

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 subcommittee.

XIII. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Rule 55

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