

Special rules and procedures

Draft decision

(PP1) Resolution EUR/RC71/R8 confirmed that the 72nd session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (RC72) would be held in Tel Aviv, Israel, from 12 to 14 September 2022. It also specified that if, based on an assessment by the Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe, conditions would not allow the Regional Committee session to be held in person, a virtual session would be organized instead on those dates.

(PP2) The Twenty-ninth Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC) at its third regular session, held on 7–8 June 2022, decided that RC72 would be held under a hybrid format. While delegations were invited to attend in person, the hybrid format would allow individual delegates to participate virtually, if particular circumstances would prevent them from travelling to Tel Aviv and attending in person.

(PP3) As a consequence of the SCRC's decision, special rules and procedures need to be put in place so that the Regional Committee can pursue its work during a hybrid session. This draft decision is intended to enable the Regional Committee to take a decision in that regard at the start of its session. The special rules and procedures to regulate the conduct of the hybrid session of the Regional Committee are set out in the Annex to this draft decision below.

(PP4) These special rules and procedures will supplement, clarify or amend the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Europe, where needed.

(PP5) Following consultation by the SCRC, this draft decision was sent to all Member States in advance of the session in order to establish whether there would be a general consensus on the proposed special rules and procedures.

ACTION BY THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE

(PP6) In view of the foregoing, the Regional Committee may wish to consider the following draft decision:

The Regional Committee for Europe, agreeing with the recommendation of the Twenty-ninth Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe to hold the 72nd session of the Regional Committee (RC72) under a hybrid format, and having considered the report on special rules and procedures,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 hybrid session of the Regional Committee, which is convened pursuant to Rule 4 of its Rules of Procedure, and which opens on Monday 12 September 2022 and closes no later than Wednesday 14 September 2022.

¹ Document EUR/RC72/CONF./1

Annex. Special rules and procedures to regulate the conduct of the hybrid 72nd 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. Members,² 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 will be physically present for the purposes of the session.

3. Registered participants who, for any reason, are not able to be physically present for the purposes of the session, can attend the session 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.

Public nature of the session

4. The hybrid session of the Regional Committee shall be broadcast on the WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe) website, in line with usual practice, with the exception of the private session, which shall be open to Members only.

Credentials

5. 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 Regional Committee.

6. 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 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.

¹ This will affect notably the relevant provisions of the following Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee: Rule 44 (voting by secret ballot, with the exception of secret ballot for elections).

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 of the WHO European Region.

Quorum

7. It is understood that both in-person and virtual attendance of any representatives of Members shall be taken into account when calculating the presence of a quorum in accordance with Rule 22 of the Rules of Procedure, except for the purposes of a secret ballot, in which case the presence of a quorum shall be calculated in accordance with paragraph 25 below.

Addressing the Regional Committee

8. During the session, Members, 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 provided with the opportunity to take the floor. Individual statements will be limited to three minutes. Group statements will be limited to five minutes. Interventions by 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 will be limited to two minutes.

9. Any participant wishing to take the floor should signal their wish to speak, preferably in advance of the session, for the purpose for managing the speakers' list. During the session, in accordance with Rule 26 of the Rules of Procedure, the presiding officer can declare the list of speakers closed.

10. Members and States that are not members of the Regional Committee shall also have the opportunity, if they so wish, to submit prerecorded video statements. These video statements will be broadcast at the meeting in lieu of a live intervention under the relevant item. The same conditions and time limits apply as for live interventions.

11. Prerecorded video statements submitted by 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 posted on the WHO/Europe website.

12. Participants are requested to submit prerecorded video statements in advance of the opening of the session, with an indication of the agenda item to which they refer.

13. Members, 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.

14. Interventions on the items of "Progress reports"; "Matters arising from resolutions and decisions of the World Health Assembly and the WHO Executive Board"; and "Engagement with non-State actors: accreditation and triennial review of regional non-State actors not in official relations with WHO to attend meetings of the Regional Committee", will be limited to written statements only.

15. Written statements, with the exception of those submitted in the exercise of a right of reply, may be submitted until the closure of the 72nd session of the Regional Committee for Europe (RC72) and 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 the written statements will be summarized/reflected, in accordance with the usual practice, in the report of RC72.

16. 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 along the submitted written statement and shall be clearly marked with the words "unofficial translation".

17. 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.

18. 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 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 session.

Decision-making

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

20. In accordance with Rule 41, in the event that a vote is required, and with the exception of a secret ballot vote to be conducted under the item "Elections and nominations", voting shall normally take place by show of hand. Member States of the Region, whose representatives or alternates are not physically present for the purposes of the session, shall be invited by the presiding officer to use the "raise hand" feature of the videoconferencing platform that was identified for this session, or to clearly show their hand through the video connection. If a Member is represented by both delegates who are physically and virtually present, the delegate who is physically present shall be invited to cast the vote on its behalf.

21. In the event that it is decided to conduct a roll call in accordance with Rule 41, should any delegate, whether physically present or virtually connected, 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. If a Member is represented by delegates who are both physically and virtually present, the delegate who is physically present shall be invited to cast the roll call vote on its behalf.

22. 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 session. The content of written statements consisting of the explanations of vote shall remain posted on the WHO/Europe website in the language of submission until the adoption of the report of the session and be summarized/reflected, in accordance with the usual practice, in the report of the session.

23. In accordance with Rule 14.2.2 (b), the Regional Committee shall make every effort to reach consensus among Member States submitting nominations. If, however, it proves impossible to reach consensus on the seats vacant within a given subgroup for a specific governing body, elections and nominations shall be held by secret ballot vote in accordance with Rule 43.

24. Since the secrecy of the vote cannot be secured through virtual means, the secret ballot vote under the item "elections and nominations" shall be conducted in person among the Member States of the Region whose representatives or alternates, duly authorized to speak and vote on behalf of their respective delegations, are physically present. For these purposes, Member States of the Region may include in their credentials submitted, inter alia, persons who are members of their diplomatic representation in Tel Aviv or

elsewhere, or any other persons for that matter, including persons who are not nationals of the Member State concerned, provided that such persons are not already accredited at RC72 as part of another delegation.

25. The quorum for the conduct of the vote shall be calculated only on the basis of physical presence for the vote.

Scope of the special rules and procedures

26. The special rules and procedures set out above are adopted for the sole purpose of RC72, as an exceptional measure to secure its functioning and the continuity of the work of the Organization, and should not be considered as setting a precedent for future sessions.

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