
**Revision of rules of procedure for the Regional Committee of the Eastern
Mediterranean – Regional Committee 58 Decision no. 7**

Introduction

1. The Regional Committee decided at its 57th session in October 2010 to review its Rules of Procedure which were last updated in 1986. The Committee noted, in this respect, that the Rules of Procedure are intended to protect the rights of individual Members. They are equally intended to permit an orderly conduct of business and an adequate guarantee of fair play to all concerned.

2. The Regional Committee further decided, at its 58th session in October 2011, that the review of the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee should be entrusted to a technical committee with legal and administrative background, which would report back to the subcommittee in due course. The technical committee met and presented its report to the subcommittee at a meeting held in the Regional Office on 3 March 2012. In line with the decision of the Regional Committee, the Chair of the session invited fellow members of the Bureau as well as any interested Member States to participate. The session was attended in person by the Chair H.E. Dr Ahmed bin Mohamed bin Obaid Al Saidi, Minister of Health, Oman and Dr Mahmoud Ali Yahia Al Abbasi, Director-General of External Relations, Sudan, while the First Vice Chair, H.E. Dr Abdiaziz Sheikh Yusuf, Minister of Health, Somalia participated via teleconference.

3. The technical committee's report contained a number of considerations and proposals concerning the revision of certain aspects of the Rules of Procedure for the consideration of the Bureau of the Regional Committee. In reviewing the existing Rules of Procedure, the technical committee only focused on those rules which, in its view, warranted a revision based on the following criteria: 1) the practice of the Committee differs from the provision of the Rules; 2) the rules are not in alignment with the corresponding Rules of Procedure of the Health Assembly and Executive Board; 3) the revision is supported by Member States in the context of the on-going reform process and reflects best practices followed by other regional committees.

4. The subcommittee discussed the proposals in depth and decided that the following proposed changes should be put to the 59th session of the Regional Committee for consideration. Since that meeting, two Member States have sent additional comments which are included at the end of the report. The report of the technical committee provides background information used by the subcommittee during its deliberations and the basis for recommending the amendments listed below.¹

Proposed changes

Rule 2. Membership and attendance

5. Based on the corresponding rule of the Regional Committee for Europe, it is proposed to amend the rule with regard to participation by observers in the work of the Regional Committee as follows:

“Subject to the terms of any existing agreements, the Regional Committee may arrange for consultation with the respective regional committees of the United Nations and with those of

¹ The report of the technical committee will be made available to the Regional Committee prior to the Session.

other specialized agencies and with other regional international organizations having interests in common with the World Health Organization and for their participation, without vote, in its discussions. The Regional Director, in consultation with the Regional Committee, may invite States that are not members of the Committee to participate without vote in the sessions of the Committee. The Regional Director, in consultation with the Regional Committee, 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'."

Rule 3. Credentials

6. Based on corresponding rules of the World Health Assembly and Regional Committee for Africa, the proposed revision to Rule 3 clarifies which authorities may issue credentials and establishes that the officers of the Regional Committee shall examine submitted credentials. The proposed revision reads as follows:

"Rule 3. The Member States shall communicate to the Regional Director, not less than fifteen 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 and names of alternates, advisers and observers shall be submitted to the Regional Director if possible not less than two days before the opening of the session of the Regional Committee. Such credentials shall be issued by the Head of State or Government, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Health or any other equivalent authority.

Rule 3 bis.: The officers of the Regional Committee shall examine the credentials of representatives and report thereon to the Regional Committee. Any representative to whose admission a Member has made objection shall be seated provisionally with the same rights as other representatives, until the officers have reported and the Regional Committee has given its decision."

Rule 10. Officers of the Committee

7. It was decided that no change was necessary, at this point in time, given the proposed changes to rule 16.

Rule 16. Sub-Committees of the Committee

8. After reviewing the proposals presented, the subcommittee recommends the following:

The length of the Regional Committee could be shortened and would cover:

- Opening ceremony and election of officers;
- Regional Director's annual report;
- Report of the Chair of the Consultative Committee;
- Managerial and budgetary issues;
- Special technical topics;
- Briefing on World Health Assembly and Executive Board agenda items;
- Adoption of relevant resolutions.

9. The Consultative Committee, with technical representation from all Members, would meet for two days, immediately prior to the Regional Committee, to:

- discuss and review regional strategies and technical matters;
- follow up on the implementation of past resolutions;
- propose draft resolutions for the consideration of the Regional Committee;
- propose agenda items for subsequent sessions of the Regional Committee.

Rule 37. Multiple proposals

10. Based on corresponding Rules of the Health Assembly and Executive Board, the subcommittee proposes to revise the rule as follows:

“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 Member States, unless the result of a vote on a proposal makes unnecessary any other voting on the proposal or proposals still outstanding.”

Rule 48. Elections

11. Based on corresponding Rules of the Health Assembly and Executive Board, the subcommittee proposes to revise the rule as follows:

“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 tellers appointed by the Chair from among the representatives shall assist in the counting of votes. Only ballot papers on which there are the same number of names as there are elective places to be filled shall be considered as valid votes. The nomination of the Regional Director shall be decided by secret ballot in accordance with Rule 51.”

Rule 51. Nomination of the Regional Director

12. In line with the current reform process and best practice across the Organization, the subcommittee proposes the following revisions to: a) make provisions for a sudden vacancy in the post of the Regional Director; and b) improve the perceived credibility and legitimacy of the process for the nomination of the Regional Director:

“(f) If the Director is unable to perform the functions of his or her office or if his or her office becomes vacant before his or her term of office is completed, the Committee shall nominate a person for the post of Director at its next session, provided that the other provisions of this Rule are met. If the other provisions of this Rule cannot be met, the Committee shall take a decision at its next session with a view to nominating a person and submitting his or her name to the Executive Board as soon as possible.

(f bis) If the Director-General receives more than five proposals within the period specified in paragraph (b) of this Rule, the Committee shall draw up a shortlist of five candidates at a private meeting 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 shortlist. In the event of a tie between two or more candidates such that there are more than five candidates identified for inclusion on the shortlist, there shall be additional ballots between the candidates receiving the tie votes, with those receiving the highest number of votes filling the remaining place or places on the shortlist.

(f ter) The persons proposed in accordance with paragraph (b) of this Rule, or – in case of the preceding paragraph (f bis) being applicable – those persons on the shortlist, shall be

interviewed by the Committee as soon as possible at a private meeting. The interview shall consist of a presentation by each candidate in addition to answers to questions from members. The Committee shall determine, as appropriate, modalities for the interviews.”

Subsequent comments received from Member States

Rule 2

13. Bahrain proposes to include “when appropriate” in line 5 to read “The Regional Director, in consultation with the Regional Committee, when appropriate, may invite States not members of the Committee to participate without vote in the sessions of the Committee”.

Rule 10

14. Qatar proposes the inclusion of the Chair of Technical Discussions in the membership of the Bureau.

Rule 16

15. Bahrain proposes that the consultative committee meet for three days, one month prior to the opening of the Regional Committee meeting.

16. Qatar proposes the establishment of a subcommittee to regularly follow up and monitor the implementation of recommendations and decisions of the Member States and refer them to the Consultative Committee three months before the Regional Committee meeting.

Rule 51

17. Bahrain, while agreeing on the adoption of criteria for the nomination of the Regional Director, is not in favour of the process of shortlisting and interview. Bahrain suggests that all nominations, including candidates’ details, be sent to all Member States and the voting procedures remain the same as at present.

18. Qatar proposes that the report of the Working Group on the Election of the Director-General be taken into consideration as well as the discussions on developing the final formula for nomination of the Regional Director, such as:

- securing equal opportunity for all candidates;
- setting up a forum for candidates to help them introduce themselves to Member States, and making it available online; and
- taking practical measures to increase the number of qualified candidates.

19. Saudi Arabia prefers that all nominations be voted on, even if the total number of nominations exceeds 5.

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Corrigendum

Page 3, Rule 48. Elections, paragraph 11, last sentence of the quoted text should read as follows:

“The nomination of the Regional Director shall be decided by secret ballot in accordance with these Rules.”