

Process for the election of the Director-General

The document provides an overall description of the process for the election of the Director-General, including reference to relevant rules, resolutions and decisions. Information on the election process and the applicable rules and decisions, as well as the text of the Code of Conduct for the Election of the Director-General has been posted in all official languages on the following page of the WHO website: <http://apps.who.int/gb/ep/>.



**World Health
Organization**

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1. Process April–December 2016

April–September 2016: Submission of candidatures

Proposals of candidates

1. On Friday, 22 April 2016 – i.e. not less than nine months before the date fixed for the opening of the 140th session of the Executive Board at which the nomination for the post of Director-General will take place – the Director-General informed Member States that they may propose one or more persons for the post of Director-General.¹
2. Proposals had to be accompanied by a curriculum vitae (CV) for each person. The standard form for CVs contained in Annex 3 to resolution WHA66.18 had to be used. This was the sole document to be submitted and was limited to 3500 words.² Any additional pages were considered to be part of the CV, and the word limit was accordingly understood to apply to any additional pages. However, the limit did not include the text of the questions. The Chairman of the Board was to verify that the word limit was respected³ and, should it not have been the case, was to extract what he considered to be essential parts of the CV to reduce it to fewer than 3500 words in the language of submission. The CV also had to be submitted in electronic format on a USB memory storage device.
3. Furthermore, proposals had to include a statement to the effect that the Member State and the person proposed pledged to observe the provisions of the “Code of Conduct for the Election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization” (the Code of Conduct).⁴
4. Proposals had to be sent under confidential sealed cover to the Chairman of the Board and reach the WHO headquarters not later than 18:00 Central European Time on Thursday, 22 September 2016 – i.e. not less than four months before the date fixed for the opening of the 140th session of the Executive Board.⁵

Acknowledgment of prospective candidates

5. Although nominations were not formally opened until Friday, 23 September 2016, the Director-General acknowledged the names of prospective candidates for the position of Director-General before the deadline for submitting candidatures had expired, if the nominating State had so agreed.⁶

¹ Rule 52, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

² Resolution WHA66.18, paragraphs 3 and 4.

³ Resolution WHA66.18, paragraph 4.

⁴ Section B.I of the Code of Conduct contained in Annex 1 to resolution WHA66.18.

⁵ Rule 52, paragraph 2 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

⁶ Summary records of the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly, Committee B, Third Meeting, Section 2, in which Member States noted the Director-General’s intention with approval.

Opening of proposals and announcement of candidates

6. After the expiry of the deadline for submission of candidatures, on Friday, 23 September 2016, the Chairman of the Board, assisted by the Legal Counsel, opened the proposals received, and verified that the CVs received had also been submitted electronically and that they respected the 3500 word limit as referred to in paragraph 2 above.¹

7. Based on established practice, the Secretariat announced the names of candidates and nominating Member States on the WHO website on Friday, 23 September 2016.

Dispatch of proposals to Member States and publication of information

8. The Director-General ensured that all proposals, CVs and supporting information were translated into the WHO official languages, duplicated and dispatched electronically to all Member States by 22 October 2016, i.e. not less than three months before the date fixed for the opening of the 140th session of the Executive Board.²

9. The Secretariat posted on the WHO website information on all candidates, unless otherwise indicated in the proposal, including their CVs and other particulars of their qualifications and experience as received from Member States, as well as their contact information.³ The Secretariat also provided links to individual websites of candidates upon request.⁴

Medical examination of candidates

10. In order to ascertain that candidates fulfil the requirement to have “the good physical condition required of all staff members of the Organization”, the Secretariat invited candidates to undergo a medical examination. A completed WHO medical examination form is to be brought to the attention of the Director, WHO Staff Health and Wellbeing Services at Headquarters.⁵

April 2016 onwards: Electoral campaign activities, including during Regional Committee sessions

Requirements applying to electoral campaign activities

11. Member States and candidates should conduct electoral campaign activities related to the election of the Director-General, whenever they take place until the appointment by the Health Assembly, in accordance with relevant provisions of the Code of Conduct.

¹ Rule 52, paragraph 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board and resolution WHA66.18, paragraph 4.

² Rule 52, paragraph 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

³ Section B.II.11 of the Code of Conduct contained in Annex 1 to resolution WHA66.18.

⁴ Candidates are responsible for setting up and financing their own websites.

⁵ Based on past practice developed by the Secretariat and agreed upon by the Board in resolution EB120.R19.

12. In particular, Member States and candidates should consider disclosing their campaign activities (for example, hosting of meetings, workshops and visits) and communicating them to the Secretariat. Information so disclosed will be posted on a dedicated page of the WHO website.¹

Electoral campaign activities during Regional Committee sessions

13. Under the Code of Conduct, Member States and candidates are invited to consider using as much as possible existing mechanisms, including sessions of the Regional Committees, for meetings and other promotional activities linked to the electoral campaign. Candidates, whether internal or external, should not combine their official travel with campaigning activities. Electoral promotion or propaganda under the guise of technical meetings or similar events should also be avoided.²

14. As three of the Regional Committee sessions in 2016 took place before the final list of candidates was known, it was not envisaged that candidates would officially present their candidacies in any of the Regional Committees. However, candidates and Member States were encouraged to hold campaign events in the margins of Regional Committees, for example in the form of meetings organized by or in support of individual candidates, or of meetings organized by Member States, or groups of Member States, to hear from several candidates. It was not anticipated that campaigning would take place as part of the Regional Committees' sessions and, in particular, candidates and Member States were not given speaking time during official meetings to promote a candidacy. Campaign events took place during breaks in the official programme or before or after official meetings. In order to ensure equal treatment and fairness, to the extent that opportunities were provided for campaign activities, these opportunities were open to all candidates on a similar basis.

October 2016: Web forum

Duration and participation

15. The Secretariat opened a password-protected forum for questions and answers on the WHO website, which was open to all Member States, and candidates. This took place from Monday, 24 October 2016 at 00:01 (Geneva time) until Sunday, 13 November 2016 at midnight (Geneva time).

Access

16. The Secretariat provided each Member State with one set of credentials to access the web forum. Credentials could be used by one or more persons at the discretion of the Member State concerned. Candidates also received instructions on how to access the web forum. Technical instructions on how to post questions and answers were available on the web forum itself.

Forum modalities

17. Member States could post questions until Saturday, 29 October 2016 at midnight (Geneva time) and candidates could post answers until Sunday, 13 November 2016. Questions and answers could be posted in any WHO official language; translation was provided into English. The forum will remain available to read-only until May 2017.

¹ Section B.II.3 of the Code of Conduct contained in Annex 1 to resolution WHA66.18.

² Section B.II.9 of the Code of Conduct contained in Annex 1 to resolution WHA66.18.

November 2016: Candidates' forum

Duration and participation

18. The Director-General, in consultation with the Chairman of the Board, convened the candidates' forum.¹ The candidates' forum was a non-decision-making platform for candidates to make themselves and their vision known to Member States on an equal basis. It was a self-standing event preceding the Board at which the nomination will take place. It opened on Tuesday, 1 November 2016 and, as decided by the Officers of the Board in light of the number of candidates, was held for a duration of two days.²

19. The forum was open to all Member States and Associate Members, and was web cast on the WHO website in all official languages.³ Candidates participating in the forum were provided travel support and per diem for the time necessary for the interview.⁴

Forum modalities

20. The forum was chaired by the Chairman of the Board with the support of the Officers of the Board. Each candidate made a presentation of up to 30 minutes, which was followed by a question and answer session so that the overall duration of each interview was 60 minutes. The order of interviews was decided by lot in advance and the forum decided, upon the proposal of the Chairman, on the detailed arrangement for the interviews. Participating Member States and Associate Members could ask questions of each candidate, and the order of questions was decided by lots by the Chairman.⁵ Candidates were invited not to be present in the room while another candidate was being interviewed.

¹ Rule 52, paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board; resolution WHA66.18, Annex 2, paragraph 1.

² Decision EB139(9) and resolution WHA66.18, paragraph 2 and Annex 2, paragraphs 1–3.

³ Resolution WHA66.18, Annex 2, paragraph 6 and Summary records of the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly, Committee B, Third Meeting, Section 2.

⁴ Document EB138/46, paragraph 7, noted by the Board (Summary Records of the 138th session of the Executive Board, Twelfth meeting, section 3).

⁵ Resolution WHA66.18, Annex 2, paragraphs 4 and 5.

2. Process January–May 2017

January 2017: Nomination by the Executive Board at its 140th session

Nature of the Board's meetings

21. All meetings related to the nomination of the Director-General will be convened as “open meetings”, i.e. attendance will be open to: members of the Board, their alternates and advisers; one representative of each Member State not represented on the Board and of each Associate Member; and the Secretariat.¹ Representatives of Member States not represented on the Board and of Associate Members may attend open meetings without the right to participate.¹ No official record shall be made thereof.¹ The consideration by the Board takes place in the phases outlined below.

Initial screening

22. All Members of the Board will have the opportunity to participate in an initial screening of all candidatures in order to eliminate those candidates not meeting the criteria approved by the Health Assembly in resolution WHA65.15. In this resolution the Health Assembly decided that the Board “should ensure that the nominated candidates fulfil the following criteria, while underscoring the paramount importance of professional qualifications and integrity and the need to pay due regard to equitable geographical representation, as well as gender balance in the process leading to the nomination of the candidate(s) that should be submitted to the Health Assembly; he or she should have:

- (a) a strong technical background in a health field, including experience in public health;
- (b) exposure to and extensive experience in international health;
- (c) demonstrable leadership skills and experience;
- (d) excellent communication and advocacy skills;
- (e) demonstrable competence in organizational management;
- (f) sensitivity to cultural, social and political differences;
- (g) strong commitment to the mission and objectives of WHO;
- (h) good health condition required of all staff members of the Organization;
- (i) sufficient skill in at least one of the official working languages of the Executive Board and the Health Assembly.”

23. This step is undertaken by the Board early in the session. A candidate is excluded at this stage if there is consensus in the Board that he or she does not meet the criteria.² If there is no consensus on exclusion, the nomination process moves on to the next stage, namely the determination of a short list.³

¹ Rule 7(b) of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

² Decision EB100(7); document EB132/29, paragraph 23.

³ Document A67/51, paragraph 25.

24. The Chairman of the Board will also report on the assessment performed by the Director, Staff Health and Wellbeing Services at WHO headquarters of the candidates' fulfilment of the criterion of good health condition, and the Chairman will inform the Board accordingly.¹

Shortlisting phase

25. In the event that more than five candidates are proposed, the Board will draw up a short list of candidates "underscoring the paramount importance of professional qualifications and integrity and paying due regard to equitable geographical representation and gender balance."² The short list will be determined through one or more secret ballots, during which members must vote for the number of candidates equal to the number of places to be filled, i.e. five.³ The candidate or candidates receiving the lowest number of votes, as well as any candidates not receiving a minimum proportion of the votes cast (set at 10% of the ballot papers) will be eliminated until the number of remaining candidates equals the number of places to be filled.⁴ If there are five or fewer candidates, this stage of the process will be omitted.

26. In this context, the term "votes cast" is to be regarded as equivalent to "members present and voting", which is defined in rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.⁵ This is the figure the Secretariat will use when calculating the minimum proportion of votes cast for the purpose of elimination of candidates. Thus, the 10% threshold will be attained by a candidate if he or she secures three votes when the number of members present and voting is between 21 and 30 (inclusive), and four when the number of members present and voting is between 31 and 34 (inclusive).

27. Furthermore, the term "members present and voting" refers to those members casting a valid affirmative or negative vote, whereas members abstaining from voting will be considered as not voting.⁶

Interviews of candidates

28. The shortlisted candidates, or the candidates presented, will be interviewed by the Board as a whole as soon as possible.⁷ The day for the interviews is fixed in consultation with the Chairman. The candidates' travel expenses to Geneva are covered for purposes of attending the interview.⁸ If necessary, the Board may extend the session in order to hold interviews and make its selection.⁹

¹ Resolution EB120.R19, operative paragraph 1.

² Rule 52(7) of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board; resolution WHA65.15, operative paragraph 1.

³ Decision EB100(7), operative paragraphs 2 and 4.

⁴ Decision EB100(7), paragraph 3.

⁵ Summary records of the 139th session of the Executive Board, Third meeting, section 2.

⁶ Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

⁷ Rule 52, paragraph 7 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

⁸ Document A67/51, paragraph 27.

⁹ Rule 52, paragraph 8 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

29. Each interview is to last not more than 60 minutes and will be divided equally between (i) an oral presentation of the candidate's vision for the future priorities of the Organization, with an analysis of current problems facing it and suggestions as to how those should be addressed, and (ii) a question and answer session. However, if there are insufficient questions to fill the allotted time, the candidate may make additional statements until the end of the period set for the interview provided that the total time of 60 minutes is not exceeded.

Nomination phase

30. The Board will fix a date for the meeting at which it will nominate up to three persons by secret ballot, from among the candidates presented, or those on the short list if one was established.¹ In the exceptional circumstance in which the nomination of three candidates is not practicable, for instance when there are only one or two candidates, the Board may decide to nominate fewer than three candidates.² A vote by secret ballot is required,³ even in cases in which there is one candidate.

31. Each member of the Board is to select the names of three candidates from the short list. Those candidates obtaining in the first ballot the majority required, i.e. simple majority, are elected. If the number of candidates obtaining such majority is less than the number of places to be filled, the candidate having received the least number of votes shall be eliminated at each ballot. If two candidates tie for the least number of votes, a separate ballot is held between them and the candidate receiving the least number of votes is eliminated. The same mechanism applies, *mutatis mutandis*, when the Board decides to nominate fewer than three candidates.⁴ Members abstaining from voting are considered as not voting⁵ and will not be counted for purposes of calculating the majority.

Submission of names of nominated candidates to the Health Assembly

32. The name of the person or persons nominated are announced at a public meeting of the Board, to be convened immediately after adjournment of the open meeting, and are submitted to the Health Assembly.⁶ The Board will propose a draft contract establishing the terms and conditions of appointment, salary and other emoluments attached to the office.⁷ For this purpose, the Board will have before it a draft that reflects previous contracts. The contract's duration is set at five years, with eligibility for reappointment for only one additional term.⁸

33. The Secretariat will provide support to candidates nominated by the Executive Board, on an equal basis, upon request, and in a transparent manner. In particular, the Secretariat will establish a focal point to respond, or facilitate a response, to any request for information that a candidate

¹ Rule 52, paragraph 9 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board; resolution WHA67.2, operative paragraph 2.

² Rule 48 and rule 52, paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

³ Rule 52 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

⁴ Rule 52, paragraph 10 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

⁵ Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

⁶ Rule 52, paragraph 11 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

⁷ Rules 106 and 107 of the Rules of Procedure of the Health Assembly.

⁸ Rule 106 of the Rules of Procedure of the Health Assembly.

nominated for the post of Director-General may wish to address to the Organization. In order to ensure equity and transparency, all Secretariat responses will be shared with all candidates.¹

May 2017: Appointment by the Seventieth World Health Assembly

Candidates' statements

34. Candidates nominated by the Board address the Health Assembly before the vote as follows: (a) statements will be limited to 15 minutes; (b) the order of statements will be decided by lot; (c) there shall be no questions and answers; and (d) candidates' statements will be webcast on the WHO website in all official WHO languages.²

Appointment

35. The Health Assembly will consider nominations when the session is resumed after the lunch break at a private meeting, i.e. attendance will in principle be limited to delegations of Members, and representatives of Associate Members and of the United Nations.³ In light of the limited space available in the Assembly Hall, Member States will be provided with distinctive badges that will allow up to four persons to sit in the Assembly Hall.

36. The Health Assembly will reach a decision by secret ballot.⁴ The Director-General of the World Health Organization is elected by a clear and strong majority of Members present and voting as set out in Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure.⁵ This rule provides for different majorities to apply at different stages of the election.

When three persons are nominated

37. When the Board nominates three persons:

(a) If in the first ballot a candidate obtains a majority of two thirds or more of the Members present and voting, this will be considered a clear and strong majority and that candidate will be appointed Director-General. If no candidate obtains the required two-thirds majority, the candidate having received the least number of votes is eliminated. If two candidates tie for the least number of votes, a separate ballot is held between them and the candidate receiving the least number of votes is eliminated.

(b) In the subsequent ballot, a candidate will be appointed Director-General if he or she obtains a two-thirds or greater majority of the Members present and voting, a result that will be considered a clear and strong majority.

(c) If no candidate receives the majority indicated in subparagraph (b), a candidate will be appointed Director-General if he or she receives in the subsequent ballot a majority of the

¹ Document EB138/46.

² Resolution WHA69.18.

³ Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure of the Health Assembly.

⁴ Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure of the Health Assembly.

⁵ Rule 70 bis of the Rules of Procedure of the Health Assembly.

Member States of the World Health Organization or more, which will be considered a clear and strong majority. The Board at its 139th session agreed to the Chairman's proposal that, should that stage in the election be reached, and on the assumption that the membership of the Organization remains at 194, the majority required be fixed at 98. Nonetheless, although they will be counted for the purpose of calculating the majority required in this round of voting, Members having lost the right to vote will, as at previous ballots, not be entitled to participate in voting.¹

(d) If no candidate receives the majority indicated in subparagraph (c), a candidate will be appointed Director-General if he or she receives in the subsequent ballot a majority of the Members present and voting, which will be considered a clear and strong majority.

When two persons are nominated

38. When the Board nominates two persons:²

(a) A candidate will be appointed Director-General if he or she obtains a majority of two thirds or more of the Members present and voting, which will be considered a clear and strong majority.

(b) If no candidate receives the majority indicated in subparagraph (a), a candidate will be appointed Director-General if he or she receives in the subsequent ballot a majority of the Member States of the World Health Organization or more, which will be considered a clear and strong majority.

(c) If no candidate receives the majority indicated in subparagraph (b), a candidate will be appointed Director-General if he or she receives in the subsequent ballot a majority or more of the Members present and voting, which will be considered a clear and strong majority.

When one person is nominated

39. If the Board nominates one person, the Health Assembly will decide by a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting.³

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

² Rule 108, n. 2 of the Rules of Procedure of the Health Assembly.

³ Rule 108, n. 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Health Assembly.

Announcement of the new Director-General and contract of appointment

40. The decision of the Health Assembly will be announced at an early public meeting.¹
41. Once the Director-General is appointed, the Health Assembly will approve his or her contract of appointment, which will be signed jointly by the Director-General and the President of the World Health Assembly, acting in the name of the World Health Organization.²
42. The Secretariat will support the Director-General elect with the provision of a transition team and an office in WHO headquarters to enable him or her to prepare for taking office on 1 July 2017.

¹ Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure of the Health Assembly.

² Rule 110 of the Rules of Procedure of the Health Assembly.

3. Voting scenarios

1. What happens if, during the shortlisting phase at the Executive Board, two or more candidates, having received more than 10% of the votes cast by members present and voting, tie for the least number of votes in such a way that if they were both (all) eliminated the shortlist would consist of fewer than five names?

In such an eventuality, and in accordance with rule 51 ter of the rules of procedure of the Executive Board, a ballot would be held among the tying candidates to determine who among them will be elected to fill the available places on the shortlist.

2. What happens if, during the shortlisting phase at the Executive Board, two or more candidates receive less than 10% of the votes cast by members present and voting in such a way that if they were both (all) eliminated the shortlist would consist of fewer than five names?

In such an eventuality, it would be proposed to the Executive Board to proceed by eliminating the candidate(s) receiving the least number of votes among the two or more candidates having received less than 10% of the votes cast by members present and voting in order to arrive at a shortlist of five candidates.

3. What happens if, during the nomination phase at the Executive Board, more than three candidates obtain in the first ballot the majority required?

It is possible for more than three candidates to secure a simple majority of the members present and voting in the first round of voting, as required by the Rule 52, paragraph 10 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, although only three places are available on the nomination list. In such an eventuality, the interpretation set out in the Draft Standard Rules of Procedure for United Nations Conferences will be followed, according to which those candidates, in a number not exceeding the number of places to be filled, obtaining in the first ballot a majority of the votes cast and the largest number of the votes shall be nominated.¹

4. What happens if, during the nomination phase at the Executive Board, four candidates obtain in the first ballot the majority required, two of whom tie for the least number of votes among those obtaining the required majority?

A separate ballot will be held between the candidates tying for the least number of votes, and the candidate receiving the least number of votes will be eliminated.

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

5. What happens if, during the nomination phase at the Executive Board, fewer than three candidates obtain in the first ballot the majority required?

If two candidates obtain in the first ballot the majority required, those two candidates are nominated. A further ballot will be conducted to determine which of the remaining candidates fills the remaining place on the nomination list.

If one candidate obtains in the first ballot the majority required, that candidate is nominated. One or more further ballot will be conducted to determine which of the remaining candidates fill the remaining places on the nomination list.

If at any stage, two candidates have been nominated and, after eliminating the candidate having received the least number of votes, only one candidate remains, a further ballot will be held involving that one candidate. If the candidate obtains the required majority, he or she will be nominated; if the candidate fails to obtain the required majority, the Board will consider whether to nominate fewer than three candidates or how otherwise to proceed.

6. What happens if, during the nomination phase at the Executive Board, no candidate obtains in the first ballot the majority required?

If no candidate obtains in the first ballot the majority required, further ballots will be conducted to determine which candidates fill the places on the nomination list.

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