



Ref.: C.L.16.2026

Process for the election of the Director-General

The Director-General of the World Health Organization presents his compliments to Member States and has the honour to refer to Article 31 of the Constitution of the World Health Organization (Annex 1 hereto) concerning the nomination and appointment of the Director-General, Rule 62 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board (Annex 2 hereto) and the Code of Conduct for the Election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization (“Code of Conduct”) (Annex 3 hereto).

Submission of proposals

In accordance with Rule 62 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, at least nine months before the date fixed for the opening of a session of the Board at which a nomination for the post of Director-General takes place, the Director-General shall inform Member States that they may propose persons for nomination by the Board for the post of Director-General. Proposals have to reach the headquarters of the Organization not less than four months before the date fixed for the opening of the session of the Board.

The 160th session of the Executive Board is proposed to open on 25 January 2027. Proposals must therefore reach the headquarters of the Organization, at the address indicated below, **not later than 18:00 (CEST), on 24 September 2026.**

The Director-General has the honour to draw the attention of Member States to the following:

- (1) Any Member State may propose for the post of Director-General one or more persons.
- (2) In submitting proposals, Member States are invited to note resolution WHA65.15 (2012) (Annex 4 hereto), through which the Health Assembly decided that the Executive Board should ensure that nominated candidates fulfil the set of criteria listed therein, and are encouraged to submit proposals only of those persons considered to meet these criteria and who have indicated their willingness to serve as Director-General.
- (3) Proposals must be accompanied by the curriculum vitae of the person proposed for the post of Director-General. In accordance with resolution WHA66.18 (2013) (Annex 5 hereto):
 - (i) the standard form for curriculum vitae enclosed with this circular letter (Annex 6 hereto) must be used as the sole document to be submitted by Member States proposing persons for the post of Director-General;

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- (ii) the curriculum vitae of each candidate shall be limited to 3500 words and shall also be submitted in electronic format, both in Word and PDF format, to the following email address: dgelection@who.int, to enable the Chair of the Board to verify that this limit is not exceeded. The 3500-word limit will be interpreted as applying to the curriculum vitae, including any additional pages that may be added to it in accordance with the standard form for the curriculum vitae itself (although excluding the wording of the standard form itself). Furthermore, reference to “supporting information” in Rule 62 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board will be interpreted as referring only to any additional pages that may be added to the curriculum vitae in accordance with the standard form for a curriculum vitae itself (and which must therefore be included within the 3500-word limit).

(4) Paragraph A.III of the Code of Conduct provides that “[i]t is the responsibility of Member States and candidates for the post of Director-General of the World Health Organization to observe and respect this code.” In accordance with section B.I. of the Code of Conduct, proposals should include a statement to the effect that the Member State and the person(s) proposed for the post of Director-General pledge to observe the provisions of the Code of Conduct.

(5) Paragraph B.II.3 of the Code of Conduct provides that “All Member States and candidates should promptly disclose their campaign activities (for example, hosting of meetings, workshops and visits), together with the amount and source of all funding for campaign activities, and communicate them to the Secretariat. Information so disclosed will be posted on a dedicated page of the WHO website.” Guidance for Member States and candidates on how to communicate information on their campaign activities to the Secretariat is provided in Annex 7 hereto.

...

(6) Proposals should be enclosed in a sealed envelope prominently marked “Confidential” and bearing the code No. “D4-180-9(2027)”, and addressed to:

The Chair of the Executive Board
c/o World Health Organization – Office of the Legal Counsel
20, Avenue Appia
1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland

No other form of address should be used.

(7) To ensure safe receipt, it is recommended that proposals be sent by registered mail or hand delivered to the above address, with request for receipt of delivery. In addition, an electronic copy should also be sent to the following email address: dgelection@who.int.

(8) As noted above, proposals should be dispatched by post or by hand in such a manner as to arrive at the headquarters of the Organization in Geneva (Switzerland), **not later than 18:00 (CEST) on 24 September 2026.**

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Announcement and dispatch of proposals

In accordance with Rule 62 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, the proposals received, including the names of the candidates, will be announced and dispatched to all Member States after the closure of the last Regional Committee session prior to the session of the Board at which the nomination will take place, i.e. on or after 29 October 2026.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, after the dispatch of all proposals, curricula vitae and supporting information to Member States in accordance with Rule 62 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, the Secretariat will:

- (1) Post on the WHO website information on all candidates, including the curricula vitae and other particulars of their qualifications and experience as received from Member States as well as their contact information. The website will also provide links to individual websites of candidates, if any and upon request. Each candidate is responsible for setting up and financing her or his own website.
- (2) Open on the WHO website a password-protected web forum for questions and answers, open to all Member States and candidates. Such a forum will not be held in the case of only one candidate being proposed.

Prospective candidates

Given that the official announcement of proposals for the post of Director-General will be made only after the closure of the last regional committee session in 2026, and in line with previous practice, any Member State proposing or considering proposing a candidate may request the WHO Secretariat to acknowledge a person as a prospective candidate prior to that official announcement. The names of persons so acknowledged as prospective candidates will be posted on the WHO website and they will be invited to attend regional committee meetings in an observer capacity.

In addition, any WHO staff member who is proposed as a candidate will be acknowledged as a prospective candidate as soon as possible after the opening of proposals, if they have not already been acknowledged as such.

Internal candidates

In accordance with Staff Rule 650.2 and paragraph IV.4 of the Code of Conduct for the Election of the Director-General, the Director-General intends to place internal candidates on leave to ensure a clear separation between their campaign activities and their WHO functions. Leave will normally be applied from the date of acknowledgment as a prospective candidate.

The Director-General takes this opportunity to renew to Member States the assurances of his highest consideration.

GENEVA, 24 April 2026

ANNEX 1

Article 31 of the WHO Constitution

Article 31

The Director-General shall be appointed by the Health Assembly on the nomination of the Board on such terms as the Health Assembly may determine. The Director-General, subject to the authority of the Board, shall be the chief technical and administrative officer of the Organization.

ANNEX 2

RULE 62 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION¹

At least nine months before the date fixed for the opening of a session of the Board at which a nomination for the post of Director-General has to take place, the Director-General shall inform Member States that they may propose persons for nomination by the Board for the post of Director-General.

Any Member State may propose for the post of Director-General one or more persons, submitting with the proposal the curriculum vitae or other supporting information for each person. Such proposals shall be sent under confidential sealed cover to the Chair of the Executive Board, care of the World Health Organization in Geneva (Switzerland), so as to reach the headquarters of the Organization not less than four months before the date fixed for the opening of the session.

The Chair of the Board shall open the proposals received sufficiently in advance of the session so as to ensure that all proposals, curricula vitae and supporting information are translated into all official languages, duplicated and dispatched to all Member States after the closure of the last Regional Committee session prior to the session of the Board at which the nomination will take place, and in any event at least 10 weeks before the date fixed for the opening of the session. After the dispatch to Member States of the proposals, curricula vitae and supporting information, the Director-General shall, in consultation with the Chair of the Board, convene two candidates' forums open to all Member States and Associate Members, to which all candidates will be invited to make themselves and their vision known to Member States on an equal basis. The candidates' forums shall be chaired by the Chair of the Board. The first forum should be held not later than two months before the opening of the Board and the second one not later than two months before the opening of the Health Assembly. The Board shall decide on the modalities of the candidates' forums. The candidates' forums shall not be convened in case only one person has been proposed for the post of Director-General.

If no proposals have been received by the deadline referred to in the second paragraph of this Rule, the Director-General shall immediately inform all Member States of this fact and that they may propose persons for nomination in accordance with this Rule, provided such proposals reach the Chair of the Board at least two weeks prior to the date fixed for the opening of the session of the Board. The Chair shall inform Member States of all such proposals as soon as possible.

All members of the Board shall have the opportunity to participate in an initial screening of all candidatures in order to eliminate those candidates not meeting the criteria proposed by the Board and approved by the Health Assembly.

¹ Text as amended by the Board at its 147th session (decision EB147(12) (2020)).

The Board shall decide, by a mechanism to be determined by it, underscoring the paramount importance of professional qualifications and integrity and paying due regard to equitable geographical representation and gender balance, on a short list of candidates. This short list shall be drawn up at the commencement of its session, and the selected candidates shall be interviewed by the Board meeting as a whole as soon as possible thereafter.

The interviews should consist of a presentation by each selected candidate in addition to answers to questions from members of the Board. If necessary, the Board may extend the session in order to hold the interviews and make its selection.

The Board shall fix a date for the meeting at which it shall nominate three persons by secret ballot from among the candidates on the short list. In exceptional circumstances where the nomination of three candidates is not practicable such as where there are only one or two candidates, the Board may decide to nominate fewer than three candidates.

For the purpose of nominating three candidates, each member of the Board shall write on her or his ballot paper the names of three candidates, chosen from the short list. 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, 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 shall be held between them and the candidate receiving the least number of votes shall be eliminated. The same mechanism shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, when the Board decides to nominate fewer than three candidates.

The name of the person or persons so nominated shall be announced at a public meeting of the Board and submitted to the Health Assembly.

ANNEX 3



The Code of Conduct for the Election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization was adopted by the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly through resolution WHA66.18 and was amended by the Seventy-third World Health Assembly through decision WHA73(27). The text below reflects a consolidated version of the Code of Conduct.

Code of Conduct for the Election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization

In resolution WHA65.15 concerning the report of the Working Group of Member States on the Process and Methods of the Election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization, the World Health Assembly decided, inter alia, that “a code of conduct, in line with Recommendation 7 of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit ‘Selection and Conditions of Service of Executive Heads in the United Nations System Organizations’, which candidates for the post of Director-General of the World Health Organization and Member States should undertake to observe and respect, will be developed by the Secretariat for consideration by the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly through the Executive Board.”

This code of conduct (the “code”) aims at promoting an open, fair, equitable and transparent process for the election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization. In seeking to improve the overall process, the code addresses several areas, including the submission of proposals, the conduct of electoral campaigns by Member States and candidates, as well as funding and financial matters.

The code is a political understanding reached by the Member States of the World Health Organization. It recommends desirable behaviour by Member States and candidates with regard to the election of the Director-General in order to increase the fairness, credibility, openness and transparency of the process and thus its legitimacy as well as the legitimacy and acceptance of its outcome. As such, the code is not legally binding but Member States and candidates are expected to honour its contents.

A. General requirements

I. Basic principles

The whole election process as well as electoral campaign activities related to it should be guided by the following principles that further the legitimacy of the process and of its result:

due regard to the principle of equitable geographical representation,

fairness,

equity,

transparency,
good faith,
dignity, mutual respect and moderation,
non-discrimination, and
merit.

II. Authority of the Health Assembly and the Executive Board in accordance with their Rules of Procedure

1. Member States accept the authority of the Health Assembly and the Executive Board to conduct the election of the Director-General in accordance with their Rules of Procedure and relevant resolutions and decisions.
2. Member States that propose persons for the post of Director-General have the right to promote those candidatures. The same applies to candidates with regard to their own candidature. In the exercise of that right, Member States and candidates should abide by all rules governing the election of the Director-General contained in the Constitution of the World Health Organization, the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly, and the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board as well as in relevant resolutions and decisions.

III. Responsibilities

1. It is the responsibility of Member States and candidates for the post of Director-General of the World Health Organization to observe and respect this code.
2. Member States acknowledge that the process of election of the Director-General should be fair, open, transparent, equitable and based on the merits of the individual candidates. They should make this code publicly known and easily accessible.
3. The Secretariat will also promote awareness of the code in accordance with the provisions of the code.

B. Requirements for the different steps of the election process

I. Submission of proposals

When proposing the name of one or more persons for the post of Director-General, Member States should include in their proposal a statement to the effect that they and the persons proposed by them pledge to observe the provisions of the code. The Director-General will remind Member States accordingly when inviting Member States to propose persons for the post of Director-General in accordance with Rule 62 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

II. Electoral campaign

1. This code applies to electoral campaign activities related to the election of the Director-General whenever they take place until the appointment by the Health Assembly.

2. All Member States and candidates should encourage and promote communication and cooperation among one another during the entire election process. Member States and candidates should act in good faith bearing in mind the shared objectives of promoting equity, openness, transparency and fairness throughout the election process.
3. All Member States and candidates should promptly disclose their campaign activities (for example, hosting of meetings, workshops and visits), together with the amount and source of all funding for campaign activities, and communicate them to the Secretariat. Information so disclosed will be posted on a dedicated page of the WHO website.
4. Member States and candidates should refer to one another with respect; no Member State or candidate should at any time disrupt or impede the campaign activities of other candidates. Nor should any Member State or any candidate make any oral or written statement or other representation that could be deemed slanderous or libellous.
5. Member States and candidates should refrain from improperly influencing the election process, by, for example, granting or accepting financial or other benefits as a quid pro quo for the support of a candidate, or by promising such benefits.
6. Member States and candidates should not make promises or commitments in favour of, or accept instructions from, any person or entity, public or private, and should avoid any other similar action, when that could undermine, or be perceived as undermining, the integrity of the election process.
7. Member States proposing persons for the post of Director-General should promptly disclose grants or aid funding to other Member States during the previous two years in order to ensure full transparency and mutual confidence among Member States.
8. Member States that have proposed persons for the post of Director-General should facilitate meetings between their candidate and other Member States, if so requested. Wherever possible, meetings between candidates and Member States should be arranged on the occasion of conferences or other events involving different Member States rather than through bilateral visits.
9. Travel by candidates to Member States to promote their candidature should be limited in order to avoid excessive expenditure that could lead to inequality among Member States and candidates. In this connection, Member States and candidates should consider using as much as possible existing mechanisms (sessions of the regional committees, Executive Board and Health Assembly) for meetings and other promotional activities linked to the electoral campaign.
10. 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 be avoided. It is understood, however, that candidates for the post of Director-General on official travel may participate in the web forum, the candidates' forums and in campaign activities on the margins of regional committee sessions.
11. After the Director-General has dispatched all proposals, curricula vitae and supporting information to Member States in accordance with Rule 62 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, the Secretariat will open on the WHO website a password-protected forum for questions and answers, open to all Member States and candidates. Such a forum will not be held in the case of only one candidate being proposed. The Secretariat will also post on the WHO website information on all candidates including their curricula vitae and other particulars of their qualifications and experience as

received from Member States within the deadline provided in the second paragraph of Rule 62 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board as well as their contact information. The website will also provide links to individual websites of candidates upon request. Each candidate is responsible for setting up and financing her or his own website.

12. The Secretariat will also post on WHO's website, at the time referred to in the first paragraph of Rule 62 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, information on the election process and the applicable rules and decisions, as well as the text of this code.

III. Nomination and appointment

1. The nomination and appointment of the Director-General is conducted by the Executive Board and the Health Assembly, respectively, in accordance with their Rules of Procedure and relevant resolutions and decisions. As a matter of principle in order to preserve the serenity of the proceedings, candidates should not attend those meetings even if they form part of the delegation of a Member State.

2. Member States should abide strictly by the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board and of the World Health Assembly and other applicable resolutions and decisions and respect the integrity, legitimacy and dignity of the proceedings. As such, they should avoid behaviours and actions, both inside and outside the conference room where the nomination and appointment take place, that could be perceived as aiming at influencing its outcome.

3. Member States should respect the confidentiality of the proceedings and the secrecy of the votes. In particular, they should refrain from communicating or broadcasting the proceedings during the private meetings through electronic devices.

4. In view of the secret nature of the vote for the nomination and appointment of the Director-General, Member States should refrain from publicly announcing in advance their intention to vote for a particular candidate.

IV. Internal candidates

1. WHO staff members, including the Director-General in office, who are proposed for the post of Director-General, are subject to the obligations contained in the WHO Constitution, Staff Regulations and Staff Rules as well as to the guidance that may be issued from time to time by the Director-General.

2. WHO staff members who are proposed for the post of Director-General must observe the highest standard of ethical conduct and strive to avoid any appearance of impropriety. WHO staff members must clearly separate their WHO functions from their candidacy and avoid any overlap, or perception of overlap, between campaign activities and their work for WHO. They also have to avoid any perception of conflict of interest.

3. WHO staff members are subject to the authority of the Director-General, in accordance with the applicable regulations and rules, in case of allegations of breach of their duties with regard to their campaign activities.

4. The Health Assembly or the Executive Board may call upon the Director-General to apply Staff Rule 650 concerning special leave to staff members who have been proposed for the post of Director-General.

ANNEX 4

WHA65.15 Election of the Director- General of the World Health Organization: Report of the Working Group

The Sixty-fifth World Health Assembly,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, inter alia, Article 101, paragraph 3;

Having regard to the Constitution of the World Health Organization, including Article 31;

Recalling resolution EB128.R14 on the Election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization, which established a time-bound and results-oriented working group on the process and methods of the election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization with a view to enhancing fairness, transparency and equity among the Member States of the six regions of the Organization with respect to the process of nomination and appointment of the Director-General of the World Health Organization;

Reaffirming that the qualifications of the candidates are of paramount importance in the selection and nomination process of the Director-General, and that due regard should be paid to the importance of recruiting future Directors-General on as wide a geographical basis as possible from Member States of the six regions of the Organization;

Reaffirming the critical importance of the role of the Executive Board in the screening and nomination process, and of the World Health Assembly in electing and appointing the Director-General, and therefore the need to consider ways to strengthen and improve relevant elements of these procedures;

Having considered the report of the Working Group of Member States on the Process and Methods of the Election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization,¹

1. DECIDES that:

(a) due regard shall be paid to the principle of equitable geographical representation in the overall process of nomination, election and appointment of the Director-General of the World Health Organization, being mindful at the same time that candidates appointed to this post have so far only come from three out of the six regions of the Organization, and that the paramount consideration of the necessity of securing the highest standard of efficiency, competence and integrity in the election and appointment of the Director-General shall be maintained;

¹ Document A65/38.

(b) the Executive Board will nominate three candidates for the Health Assembly's consideration for the appointment of the Director-General of the World Health Organization, paying due regard to equitable geographical representation;

(c) in exceptional circumstances, where the above is not practicable, such as where there are only one or two candidates, the Executive Board may decide to nominate fewer than three candidates for consideration by the Health Assembly for appointment as Director-General of the World Health Organization;

(d) a code of conduct, in line with Recommendation 7¹ of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit "Selection and Conditions of Service of Executive Heads in the United Nations System Organizations",² which candidates for the post of Director-General of the World Health Organization and Member States should undertake to observe and respect, will be developed by the Secretariat for consideration by the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly through the Executive Board;

(e) a candidates' forum, open to all Member States,³ shall be established to provide a non-decision-making platform for candidates to make themselves and their vision known to Member States on an equal basis; the modalities of the candidates' forum will be developed by the Secretariat to be considered by the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly through the Executive Board;

(f) the Executive 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:

- (1) a strong technical background in a health field, including experience in public health;
- (2) exposure to and extensive experience in international health;
- (3) demonstrable leadership skills and experience;
- (4) excellent communication and advocacy skills;
- (5) demonstrable competence in organizational management;
- (6) sensitivity to cultural, social and political differences;
- (7) strong commitment to the mission and objectives of WHO;
- (8) good health condition required of all staff members of the Organization;

¹ Recommendation 7: "The legislative/governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should condemn and prohibit unethical practices such as promises, favours, invitations, gifts, etc., provided by candidates for the post of executive head or their supporting governments during the selection/election campaign, in return for favourable votes for certain candidates."

² Document JIU/REP/2009/8.

³ And, where applicable, regional economic integration organizations.

(9) sufficient skill in at least one of the official working languages of the Executive Board and the Health Assembly;

(g) appropriate tool(s) to enhance the Executive Board's effective application of the revised list of criteria will be developed by the Secretariat for consideration by the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly through the Executive Board;

(h) an evaluation, open to all Member States,¹ will be conducted by the Executive Board² within one year from the appointment of the next Director-General of the World Health Organization, to assess the efficacy of the revised process and methods, in order to discuss any need for further enhancing fairness, transparency and equity among the Member States of the six regions of WHO;

2. REQUESTS the Executive Board to give effect to all the provisions outlined in paragraph 1 above and to submit a report on the implementation of this resolution to the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly, with the exception of the report referred to in paragraph 1(h) which will be submitted to a later session of the Health Assembly;

3. FURTHER REQUESTS the Executive Board, in implementing paragraph 2, to do so on the understanding that some of the existing procedures of the Executive Board and Health Assembly such as those involving secret ballots, shortlisting, voting and interviewing of candidates have proved to be useful and effective and should be continued; the Executive Board will also consider that the Director-General should be appointed by a clear and strong majority at the Health Assembly;

4. REQUESTS the Director-General to propose to the Executive Board amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board in order to implement this resolution.

(Tenth plenary meeting, 26 May 2012 –
Committee B, second report)

¹ And, where applicable, regional economic integration organizations.

² This agenda item shall be an open meeting as provided in Rule 7(b) of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

ANNEX 5

WHA66.18 Follow-up of the report of the Working Group on the Election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization¹

The Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on the follow-up of the report of the Working Group on the Election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization,²

1. ADOPTS the Code of Conduct for the Election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization as set out in Annex 1 to this resolution;
2. ESTABLISHES a candidates' forum open to all Member States,³ as a non-decision-making platform for candidates, as set out in Annex 2 to this resolution;
3. APPROVES the standard form for a curriculum vitae, as set out in Annex 3 to this resolution, which shall be used henceforth by Member States proposing persons for the post of Director-General as the sole document to be submitted;
4. DECIDES that the curriculum vitae of each candidate shall be limited to 3500 words and shall also be submitted in electronic format in order to enable the Chairman of the Executive Board to verify that this limit is not exceeded;
5. FURTHER DECIDES to amend Rules 70 and 108 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly and to add a new Rule 70*bis*, as set out in Annex 4 to this resolution;
6. REQUESTS the Director-General:
 - (1) to explore options for the use of electronic voting for the appointment of the Director-General, including the financial and electronic security implications thereof, and to report thereon, through the Executive Board, to the Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly;
 - (2) to consolidate a description of the overall process for the election of the Director-General in a single draft reference document with a view to submitting it, through the Executive Board, for the consideration of the Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly.

ANNEX 1

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE ELECTION OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

In resolution WHA65.15 concerning the report of the Working Group of Member States on the Process and Methods of the Election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization, the World Health Assembly decided, inter alia, that "a code of conduct, in line with Recommendation 7 of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit "Selection and Conditions of Service of Executive Heads in the

¹ See Annex 6 for the financial and administrative implications for the Secretariat of Annex 2 of this resolution.

² Document A66/41.

³ And, where applicable, regional economic integration organizations.

United Nations System Organizations”, which candidates for the post of Director-General of the World Health Organization and Member States should undertake to observe and respect, will be developed by the Secretariat for consideration by the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly through the Executive Board.”

This code of conduct (the “code”) aims at promoting an open, fair, equitable and transparent process for the election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization. In seeking to improve the overall process, the code addresses several areas, including the submission of proposals, the conduct of electoral campaigns by Member States and candidates, as well as funding and financial matters.

The code is a political understanding reached by the Member States of the World Health Organization. It recommends desirable behaviour by Member States and candidates with regard to the election of the Director-General in order to increase the fairness, credibility, openness and transparency of the process and thus its legitimacy as well as the legitimacy and acceptance of its outcome. As such, the code is not legally binding but Member States and candidates are expected to honour its contents.

A. General requirements

I. Basic principles

The whole election process as well as electoral campaign activities related to it should be guided by the following principles that further the legitimacy of the process and of its result:

due regard to the principle of equitable geographical representation,
fairness,
equity,
transparency,
good faith,
dignity, mutual respect and moderation,
non-discrimination, and
merit.

II. Authority of the Health Assembly and the Executive Board in accordance with their Rules of Procedure

1. Member States accept the authority of the Health Assembly and the Executive Board to conduct the election of the Director-General in accordance with their Rules of Procedure and relevant resolutions and decisions.
2. Member States that propose persons for the post of Director-General have the right to promote those candidatures. The same applies to candidates with regard to their own candidature. In the exercise of that right, Member States and candidates should abide by all rules governing the election of the Director-General contained in the Constitution of the World Health Organization, the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly, and the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board as well as in relevant resolutions and decisions.

III. Responsibilities

1. It is the responsibility of Member States and candidates for the post of Director-General of the World Health Organization to observe and respect this code.
2. Member States acknowledge that the process of election of the Director-General should be fair, open, transparent, equitable and based on the merits of the individual candidates. They should make this code publicly known and easily accessible.
3. The Secretariat will also promote awareness of the code in accordance with the provisions of the code.

B. Requirements for the different steps of the election process

I. Submission of proposals

When proposing the name of one or more persons for the post of Director-General, Member States should include in their proposal a statement to the effect that they and the persons proposed by them pledge to observe the provisions of the code. The Director-General will remind Member States accordingly when inviting Member States to propose persons for the post of Director-General in accordance with Rule 52 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

II. Electoral campaign

1. This code applies to electoral campaign activities related to the election of the Director-General whenever they take place until the appointment by the Health Assembly.
2. All Member States and candidates should encourage and promote communication and cooperation among one another during the entire election process. Member States and candidates should act in good faith bearing in mind the shared objectives of promoting equity, openness, transparency and fairness throughout the election process.
3. All Member States and candidates should consider disclosing their campaign activities (for example, hosting of meetings, workshops and visits) and communicate them to the Secretariat. Information so disclosed will be posted on a dedicated page of the WHO web site.
4. Member States and candidates should refer to one another with respect; no Member State or candidate should at any time disrupt or impede the campaign activities of other candidates. Nor should any Member State or any candidate make any oral or written statement or other representation that could be deemed slanderous or libellous.
5. Member States and candidates should refrain from improperly influencing the election process, by, for example, granting or accepting financial or other benefits as a quid pro quo for the support of a candidate, or by promising such benefits.
6. Member States and candidates should not make promises or commitments in favour of, or accept instructions from, any person or entity, public or private, and should avoid any other similar action, when that could undermine, or be perceived as undermining, the integrity of the election process.
7. Member States proposing persons for the post of Director-General should consider disclosing grants or aid funding to other Member States during the previous two years in order to ensure full transparency and mutual confidence among Member States.

8. Member States that have proposed persons for the post of Director-General should facilitate meetings between their candidate and other Member States, if so requested. Wherever possible, meetings between candidates and Member States should be arranged on the occasion of conferences or other events involving different Member States rather than through bilateral visits.

9. Travel by candidates to Member States to promote their candidature should be limited in order to avoid excessive expenditure that could lead to inequality among Member States and candidates. In this connection, Member States and candidates should consider using as much as possible existing mechanisms (sessions of the regional committees, Executive Board and Health Assembly) for meetings and other promotional activities linked to the electoral campaign.

10. 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 be avoided.

11. After the Director-General has dispatched all proposals, curricula vitae and supporting information to Member States in accordance with Rule 52 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, the Secretariat will open on the WHO web site a password-protected forum for questions and answers, open to all Member States and candidates who request to participate in such a forum. The Secretariat will also post on the WHO web site information on all candidates who so request including their curricula vitae and other particulars of their qualifications and experience as received from Member States, as well as their contact information. The web site will also provide links to individual web sites of candidates upon request. Each candidate is responsible for setting up and financing his or her own web site.

12. The Secretariat will also post on WHO's web site, at the time referred to in the first paragraph of Rule 52 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, information on the election process and the applicable rules and decisions, as well as the text of this code.

III. Nomination and appointment

1. The nomination and appointment of the Director-General is conducted by the Executive Board and the Health Assembly, respectively, in accordance with their Rules of Procedure and relevant resolutions and decisions. As a matter of principle in order to preserve the serenity of the proceedings, candidates should not attend those meetings even if they form part of the delegation of a Member State.

2. Member States should abide strictly by the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board and of the World Health Assembly and other applicable resolutions and decisions and respect the integrity, legitimacy and dignity of the proceedings. As such, they should avoid behaviours and actions, both inside and outside the conference room where the nomination and appointment take place, that could be perceived as aiming at influencing its outcome.

3. Member States should respect the confidentiality of the proceedings and the secrecy of the votes. In particular, they should refrain from communicating or broadcasting the proceedings during the private meetings through electronic devices.

4. In view of the secret nature of the vote for the nomination and appointment of the Director-General, Member States should refrain from publicly announcing in advance their intention to vote for a particular candidate.

IV. Internal candidates

1. WHO staff members, including the Director-General in office, who are proposed for the post of Director-General, are subject to the obligations contained in the WHO Constitution, Staff Regulations and Staff Rules as well as to the guidance that may be issued from time to time by the Director-General.
2. WHO staff members who are proposed for the post of Director-General must observe the highest standard of ethical conduct and strive to avoid any appearance of impropriety. WHO staff members must clearly separate their WHO functions from their candidacy and avoid any overlap, or perception of overlap, between campaign activities and their work for WHO. They also have to avoid any perception of conflict of interest.
3. WHO staff members are subject to the authority of the Director-General, in accordance with the applicable regulations and rules, in case of allegations of breach of their duties with regard to their campaign activities.
4. The Health Assembly or the Executive Board may call upon the Director-General to apply Staff Rule 650 concerning special leave to staff members who have been proposed for the post of Director-General.

ANNEX 2

CANDIDATES' FORUM

Convening and conduct of the forum

1. The candidates' forum will be convened by the Secretariat at the request of the Executive Board as a self-standing event preceding the Board, and will be chaired by the Chairman of the Board, with the support of the Officers of the Executive Board. The Board will formally convene the candidates' forum and decide its date at the session preceding the session at which the nomination will take place.

Timing

2. The candidates' forum shall be held not later than two months in advance of the session of the Board session at which the nomination will take place.

Duration

3. The duration of the candidates' forum will be decided by the Officers of the Board depending on the number of candidates. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the maximum duration of the forum shall be three days.

Format

4. Each candidate shall make a presentation of up to 30 minutes, which will be followed by a questions and answer session so that the overall duration of each interview shall be 60 minutes. The order of the interviews shall be determined by lot. The forum shall decide, upon the proposal of the Chairman, on detailed arrangement for the interviews.

5. Member States and Associate Members participating in the candidates' forum will be invited to prepare questions for each candidate during the initial presentation. Questions to be asked to each candidate will be drawn by lot by the Chairman.

Participation

6. Participation in the candidates' forum will be limited to Member States¹ and Associate Members of the World Health Organization.

7. For those Member States or Associate Members which are not able to attend, the candidates' forum will be broadcast by the Secretariat through a password-protected web site.

Documentation

8. The curricula vitae of candidates and other supporting information provided in line with Rule 52 of the Rules of Procedure of the Board will be made available electronically to all Member States and Associate Members in the language versions provided on a password-protected web site.

¹ And, where applicable, regional economic integration organizations.

ANNEX 3

FORM FOR CURRICULUM VITAE

Family name (surname): First/other names:	Attach recent photograph
Gender:	
Place and country of birth:	Date of birth (Day/Month/Year):
Citizenship:	
If you have ever been found guilty of the violation of any law (except minor traffic violations) give full particulars:	
Civil status:	Number of dependants:

Address to which correspondence should be sent:	Telephone: Mobile phone: Fax: E-mail:
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Degrees/certificates obtained:

(Please indicate here the principal degrees/certificates obtained, with dates and names of institutions. Additional pages may be added.)

Knowledge of languages		Mother tongue	Speak	Read	Write
<p>For languages other than mother tongue, enter the appropriate number from the code below to indicate the level of your language knowledge. If no knowledge, please leave blank.</p> <p>CODE: 1. Limited conversation, reading of newspapers, routine correspondence.</p>	Arabic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	French	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Spanish	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Russian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Others (please specify)				
2. Engage freely in discussions, read and write more difficult material					
3. Fluent (nearly) as in mother tongue					

Positions held

Please indicate here the positions and work experience held during your professional career, with the corresponding dates, duties, achievements/accomplishments and responsibilities. Additional pages may be added.

Please state any other relevant facts that might help in the evaluation of your application. List your activities in civil, professional, public or international affairs.

Please list here a maximum of 10 publications - especially the main ones in the field of public health, with names of journals, books or reports in which they appeared. An additional page may be used for this purpose, if necessary. (Please feel free also to attach a complete list of all publications.) Do not attach the publications themselves.

Please list hobbies, sports, skills and any other relevant facts that might help in the evaluation of your application.

WRITTEN STATEMENT

1. Please evaluate how you meet each of the “Criteria for candidates for the post of the Director-General of the World Health Organization” (see attached sheet). In so doing, please make reference to specific elements of your curriculum vitae to support your evaluation. The criteria adopted by the World Health Assembly in resolution WHA65.15 are the following:

- (1) a strong technical background in a health field, including experience in public health;
 - (2) exposure to and extensive experience in international health;
 - (3) demonstrable leadership skills and experience;
 - (4) excellent communication and advocacy skills;
 - (5) demonstrable competence in organizational management;
 - (6) sensitivity to cultural, social and political differences;
 - (7) strong commitment to the mission and objectives of WHO;
 - (8) good health condition required of all staff members of the Organization; and
 - (9) sufficient skill in at least one of the official working languages of the Executive Board and the Health Assembly.
2. Please state your vision of priorities and strategies for the World Health Organization.

ANNEX 4

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY*Rule 70*

Decisions by the Health Assembly on important questions shall be made by a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting. These questions shall include: the adoption of conventions or agreements; the approval of agreements bringing the Organization into relation with the United Nations and with intergovernmental organizations and agencies in accordance with Articles 69, 70 and 72 of the Constitution; amendments to the Constitution; decisions on the amount of the effective working budget; and decisions to suspend the voting privileges and services of a Member under Article 7 of the Constitution.

Rule 70bis

The Director-General of the World Health Organization shall be elected by a clear and strong majority of members present and voting as set forth in Rule 108 of these Rules of Procedure.

Rule 108

The Health Assembly shall consider the Board's nomination at a private meeting and shall come to a decision by secret ballot.

1. If the Board nominates three persons, the following procedure shall apply:
 - (a) If in the first ballot a candidate obtains a two-thirds majority or more of the Members present and voting, this will be considered a clear and strong majority and he or she will be appointed Director-General. If no candidate obtains the required majority, the candidate having received the least number of votes shall be eliminated. If two candidates tie for the least number of votes, a separate ballot shall be held between them and the candidate receiving the least number of votes shall be eliminated.
 - (b) In the subsequent ballot, a candidate will be appointed Director-General if he or she obtains a two-thirds majority or more of the Members present and voting 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 of the Member States of the World Health Organization or more, which will be considered a clear and strong majority.
 - (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 or more of the Members present and voting, which will be considered a clear and strong majority.

2. If the Board nominates two persons, the following procedure shall apply:
 - (a) a candidate will be appointed Director-General if he or she obtains a two-thirds majority 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.
3. If the Board nominates one person, the Health Assembly shall decide by a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting.

(Ninth plenary meeting, 27 May 2013 –
Committee B, second report)

ANNEX 6

FORM FOR CURRICULUM VITAE

<p>Family name (surname):</p> <p>First/other names:</p>	 <p>Attach recent photograph</p>
<p>Gender:</p>	
<p>Place and country of birth:</p>	<p>Date of birth (Day/Month/Year):</p>
<p>Citizenship:</p>	
<p>If you have ever been found guilty of the violation of any law (except minor traffic violations) give full particulars:</p>	
<p>Civil status:</p>	<p>Number of dependants:</p>

Address to which correspondence should be sent:	Telephone: Mobile phone: Fax: E-mail:
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Degrees/certificates obtained:

(Please indicate here the principal degrees/certificates obtained, with dates and names of institutions. Additional pages may be added.)

Knowledge of languages		Mother tongue	Speak	Read	Write
<p>For languages other than mother tongue, enter the appropriate number from the code below to indicate the level of your language knowledge. If no knowledge, please leave blank.</p> <p>CODE: 1. Limited conversation, reading of newspapers, routine correspondence.</p> <p>2. Engage freely in discussions, read and write more difficult material</p> <p>3. Fluent (nearly) as in mother tongue</p>	Arabic				
	Chinese				
	English				
	French				
	Spanish				
	Russian				
	Others (please specify)				

Positions held

Please indicate here the positions and work experience held during your professional career, with the corresponding dates, duties, achievements/accomplishments and responsibilities. Additional pages may be added.

Please state any other relevant facts that might help in the evaluation of your application. List your activities in civil, professional, public or international affairs.

Please list here a maximum of 10 publications - especially the main ones in the field of public health, with names of journals, books or reports in which they appeared. An additional page may be used for this purpose, if necessary. (Please feel free also to attach a complete list of all publications.) Do not attach the publications themselves.

Please list hobbies, sports, skills and any other relevant facts that might help in the evaluation of your application.

WRITTEN STATEMENT

1. Please evaluate how you meet each of the “Criteria for candidates for the post of the DirectorGeneral of the World Health Organization” (see attached sheet). In so doing, please make reference to specific elements of your curriculum vitae to support your evaluation. The criteria adopted by the World Health Assembly in resolution WHA65.15 are the following:

- (1) a strong technical background in a health field, including experience in public health;
 - (2) exposure to and extensive experience in international health;
 - (3) demonstrable leadership skills and experience;
 - (4) excellent communication and advocacy skills;
 - (5) demonstrable competence in organizational management;
 - (6) sensitivity to cultural, social and political differences;
 - (7) strong commitment to the mission and objectives of WHO;
 - (8) good health condition required of all staff members of the Organization; and
 - (9) sufficient skill in at least one of the official working languages of the Executive Board and the Health Assembly.
2. Please state your vision of priorities and strategies for the World Health Organization.
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ANNEX 7

Guidance to communicate information on campaign activities to the Secretariat

In accordance with section B.II.3 of the Code of Conduct for the Election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization, “All Member States and candidates should promptly disclose their campaign activities (for example, hosting of meetings, workshops and visits), together with the amount and source of all funding for campaign activities, and communicate them to the Secretariat. Information so disclosed will be posted on a dedicated page of the WHO website.”.

It is anticipated that information so disclosed will be posted, in the language of submission and in English, on the dedicated web page on the WHO website and will be updated, as necessary.

For this purpose, Member States and candidates are invited to use the following template and to send it to dgelection@who.int.

	Hosting of meetings	Workshops	Visits	Other
Title				
Date				
Venue				
Amount and source of funding				
Link to additional information (if any)				