



Ref.: C.L.47.2024

... The Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) has the honour to communicate to Members of the Organization, in accordance with Rules 5 and 8 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, the provisional agenda and provisional annotated agenda for the **156th session of the Executive Board, which will be convened on Monday, 3 February 2025**,¹ commencing at 09:30 (CET) at WHO headquarters, Geneva.

The Executive Board will be held in person. There is no limitation applying to the number of persons registering as part of Member States and Associate Members' delegations. However, in view of the space restrictions two persons per each Member State delegation for Executive Board members and one person per each Member State delegation for non-EB members may be present in the meeting room where the Executive Board is convened.

Registration can be initiated **as of 16 December 2024** by going to the following link: <https://indico.un.org/e/EB156>. Registration should be completed by 20 January 2025.

In accordance with resolution WHA49.9 (1996), and to support the aim of achievement of SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), the Director-General invites Member States to consider that gender balance be applied to their delegations.

The Code of Conduct to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment at WHO events is available at the following link: [Code of Conduct to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, at WHO events](#).

... Documents for the 156th session of the Executive Board can be accessed on the Internet through the WHO website (<https://apps.who.int/gb/gov/>) as they become available and practical information for delegates is attached. Member States are reminded that, as agreed by the Executive Board at its 143rd session, governing body meetings are paperless.

The Director-General of the World Health Organization takes this opportunity to renew to Members of the Organization the assurance of his highest consideration.

GENEVA, 9 December 2024

¹ See Executive Board decision EB155(10), 4 June 2024.

... ENCLS.: (3)

REGISTRATION

Online registration is required to participate in the Executive Board which will be held in person.

Registration can be initiated as of 16 December 2024 by going to the following link: <https://indico.un.org/e/EB156> and should be completed by 20 January 2025.

Before each meeting, an invitation will be sent to Member States indicating a link to access the electronic Registration System (INDICO). Each participant is invited to register her/himself.

The WHO Department of Governing Bodies will verify the information received which will then be submitted into the registration system to generate the meeting badges and the list of participants.

CREDENTIALS

The credentials shall be issued by the Head of State, the Head of Government, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Health, or any other appropriate authority, i.e. Permanent Missions and senior government officials, such as Directors-General for Health. A copy of the credentials will have to be uploaded and submitted through the online registration system **before the opening of the 156th session of the Executive Board**. Credentials should include the following information for each participant: LAST NAME (in capital letters), first name, title, function, institution, city, gender (unless indicated in title).

ACCESS TO WHO HEADQUARTERS

Members of the delegations should register through INDICO in order to collect their badge and access WHO.

In view of the space restrictions, please note the following arrangements:

- Up to two members of each delegation of EB Member States may be present at a time in the meeting room.
- One member of each delegation of non-EB Member States may be present at a time in the meeting room.
- One member of each delegation of Observers, United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations and non-State actors in official relations with WHO may participate in person.

VISAS

Attention is drawn to the strict provisions in force regarding entry into Switzerland – those not having the required visa will be refused entry.

As of 13 December 2008, Switzerland has applied the Schengen visa regulations. Therefore, certain nationalities travelling to WHO headquarters to participate in meetings will require a Schengen visa in order to enter Switzerland.

Since that date, it is no longer sufficient for a participant to present the invitation letter in order to obtain a visa. A visa support letter prepared by WHO/HQ is now required.

Before requesting a visa support letter, participants are advised to contact their nearest Swiss embassy or consulate to determine whether or not they require a visa.

Member States requiring the assistance of WHO to obtain a Swiss Schengen visa are kindly invited to do so when they register for the meeting through INDICO.

Geneva, 3–11 February 2025

EB156/1

9 December 2024

Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the session and adoption of the agenda

Documents EB156/1 and EB156/1 (annotated)

2. Report by the Director-General

Document EB156/2

3. Report of the regional committees to the Executive Board

Document EB156/3

4. Report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board

Document EB156/4

5. Report of the Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response

Document EB156/5

Pillar 1: One billion more people benefiting from universal health coverage

6. Universal health coverage

- Primary healthcare

Document EB156/6

7. Follow-up to the political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases

- Reducing the burden of noncommunicable diseases through strengthening prevention and control of diabetes
- Oral health
- Comprehensive mental health action plan 2013–2030

- Global strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem and its associated goals and targets for the period 2020–2030

Document EB156/7

8. Mental health and social connection

Document EB156/8

9. Communicable diseases

Document EB156/9

- Global road map on defeating meningitis by 2030

Document EB156/10

10. Substandard and falsified medical products

Documents EB156/11 and EB156/12

11. Standardization of medical devices nomenclature

Document EB156/13

12. Health and care workforce

- WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel

Document EB156/14

- Global strategy on human resources for health: workforce 2030

Document EB156/15

13. Draft global traditional medicine strategy (2025–2034)

Document EB156/16

14. Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health

Document EB156/17

Pillar 2: One billion more people better protected from health emergencies

15. WHO's work in health emergencies

Document EB156/18

16. Implementation of resolution WHA75.11 (2022)

Document EB156/19

17. Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem

Document EB156/20

18. Universal Health and Preparedness Review

Document EB156/21

19. Poliomyelitis

Document EB156/22

Pillar 3: One billion more people enjoying better health and well-being**20. The impact of chemicals, waste and pollution on human health**

Document EB156/23

21. Updated road map for an enhanced global response to the adverse health effects of air pollution

Document EB156/24

22. Climate change and health

Document EB156/25

Pillar 4: More effective and efficient WHO providing better support to countries**23. Budget and finance matters****23.1 Financing and implementation of the Programme budget 2024–2025**

Documents EB156/26 and EB156/INF./1

23.2 Proposed programme budget 2026–2027

Document EB156/27

23.3 Scale of assessments 2026–2027 [if any]**23.4 Amendments to the Financial Regulations and Financial Rules [if any]****24. Management and governance matters****24.1 Prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment**

Document EB156/28

24.2 Governance reform

- Member State-led governance reform

Document EB156/29

- Process for handling and investigating potential allegations against WHO Directors-General

Document EB156/30

- Draft terms of reference to strengthen the effectiveness of the functioning of the Officers of the Executive Board

Document EB156/31

- Secretariat Implementation Plan on reform

Document EB156/32

- Involvement of non-State actors in WHO's governing bodies

Document EB156/33

24.3 Global strategies or action plans that are scheduled to expire within one year

- Global strategic directions for nursing and midwifery 2021–2025

Document EB156/34

- Global strategy on digital health 2020–2025

Document EB156/35

- Global action plan on the public health response to dementia 2017–2025

Document EB156/36

- Comprehensive implementation plan on maternal, infant and young child nutrition

Document EB156/37

24.4 Engagement with non-State actors

- Report on the implementation of the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors

Document EB156/38

- Non-State actors in official relations with WHO

Documents EB156/39, EB156/39 Add.1 and EB156/39 Add.2

24.5 International Health Regulations (2005): proposed procedure for the correction of errors in the text of the instrument

Documents EB156/40 and EB156/INF./2

25. Provisional agenda of the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly and date and place of the 157th session of the Executive Board

Documents EB156/41 and EB156/42

26. Committees of the Executive Board

26.1 Foundation committees and selection panels

Document EB156/43

26.2 Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee: membership renewal [if any]

26.3 Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response

Documents EB156/44 and EB156/45

27. Staffing matters

27.1 Appointment of the Regional Director for Africa

Document EB156/46¹

27.2 Appointment of the Regional Director for Europe

Document EB156/47

27.3 Statement by the representative of the WHO staff associations

Document EB156/INF./3

27.4 Report of the Ombudsperson

Document EB156/INF./4

27.5 Human resources: update

Documents EB156/48 and EB156/49

27.6 Amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules

Document EB156/50

27.7 Report of the International Civil Service Commission

Document EB156/51

¹ Consultations on the process to be followed for the appointment of the Regional Director for Africa are ongoing at the time of this document's publication. Documentation will be provided, as appropriate.

28. Report on meetings of expert committees and study groups

- Expert advisory panels and committees and their membership

Documents EB156/52 and EB156/52 Add.1

29. Closure of the session

Geneva, 3–11 February 2025

EB156/1 (annotated)

9 December 2024

Provisional agenda (annotated)

- 1. Opening of the session and adoption of the agenda**
- 2. Report by the Director-General**
- 3. Report of the regional committees to the Executive Board**

The Board will be invited to consider the recommendations and comments of the regional committees in the reports submitted pursuant to decision WHA65(9) (2012).

- 4. Report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board**

The Board will receive at the opening of its session the report of the forty-first meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, which is scheduled to be held from 29 to 31 January 2025.

- 5. Report of the Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response**

The Board will receive the report of the fifth meeting of the Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response, which was held on 3 and 4 September 2024.

Pillar 1: One billion more people benefiting from universal health coverage

- 6. Universal health coverage**

- Primary healthcare

The Director-General's report will summarize progress towards universal health coverage in 2023–2024, including primary healthcare and integrated people-centred health services in response to resolutions WHA72.2 (2019) and WHA76.4 (2023) and decision WHA77(16) (2024). The report highlights achievements and major challenges in expanding quality service coverage and strengthening financial protection. The Board will be invited to note the report and identify priorities in preparation for the next high-level meeting on universal health coverage in 2027.

- 7. Follow-up to the political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases**

- Reducing the burden of noncommunicable diseases through strengthening prevention and control of diabetes

Pursuant to resolution WHA74.4 (2021) the Director-General will submit a report outlining progress made in its implementation, through an annual report to be submitted through the Executive Board to the Health Assembly until 2031, as part of the consolidated reporting on the progress achieved in the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases.

- Oral health

Pursuant to resolution WHA74.5 (2021) the Director-General will submit a report outlining progress and results made in its implementation, through an annual report to be submitted through the Executive Board to the Health Assembly until 2031, as part of the consolidated reporting on the progress achieved in the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases.

- Comprehensive mental health action plan 2013–2030

Pursuant to decision WHA72(11) (2019) and resolution WHA77.3 (2024), the Director-General will submit an annual report until 2031 to the Board for consideration outlining progress made in their implementation, for further submission to the Health Assembly.

- Global strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem and its associated goals and targets for the period 2020–2030

Pursuant to resolution WHA73.2 (2020) the Director-General will submit a report to the Board for consideration and further submission to the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly on progress in its implementation, as part of the consolidated reporting on the progress achieved in the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases.

8. Mental health and social connection

The Director-General will submit a report that underscores the importance of combating social isolation and loneliness to improve mental and social health, outlining WHO's commitments and proposing actions to advance social connection as a global public health priority.

9. Communicable diseases

The Director-General will submit a report on two communicable disease challenges highlighted by Member States: leptospirosis and skin diseases. It will outline progress and gaps in surveillance, diagnosis and control of leptospirosis and integrated approaches to skin diseases and related conditions, including neglected tropical diseases, sexually transmitted infections and mpox. It will describe the Secretariat's actions to provide support to Member States to address these challenges.

- Global road map on defeating meningitis by 2030

In response to decision EB152(8) (2023), the Director-General will submit a report on progress in implementing resolution WHA73.9 (2020) on the global road map on defeating meningitis by 2030. The Board will be invited to note the report and provide further guidance.

10. Substandard and falsified medical products

Pursuant to resolution WHA65.19 (2012), the Director-General will transmit a report on the outcomes of the twelfth and thirteenth plenary meetings of the Member State mechanism on substandard and falsified medical products. The report will include a review of the progress made in implementing 10 activities prioritized for the period 2024–2025 that align with WHO's strategy to prevent, detect and respond to substandard and falsified medical products. Also submitted will be a report on the outcomes of the independent evaluation of the mechanism. The Board will be invited to note the reports, to consider a draft decision and to provide guidance on follow-up actions to the independent evaluation.

11. Standardization of medical devices nomenclature

Following decision WHA75(25) (2022) the Director-General will submit a report on the integration of terms, codes and definitions in the Priority Medical Devices Information System (MeDevIS) and their linkage with other WHO platforms. The Board will be invited to note the report and provide further guidance.

12. Health and care workforce

- WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel

The WHO global code of practice facilitates national, regional and global responses on ethical migration of health workers and health systems strengthening and includes provisions for Member States to provide regular reports on its implementation and for the Director-General to maintain the Code as a dynamic text. The Director-General will submit a report that consolidates new evidence and insights, as well as the interim findings of the Expert Advisory Group for the third review of the Code. The Board will be invited to note the report and to consider a draft decision regarding the interim findings of the Expert Advisory Group.

- Global strategy on human resources for health: workforce 2030

The Director-General will submit a report that summarizes progress in the implementation of both WHO's global strategy on human resources for health and, as requested by the Health Assembly, related health and care workforce resolutions and decisions (WHA70.6 (2017), WHA72.3 (2019), WHA73(30) (2020), WHA74.14 (2021), WHA74.15 (2021) and WHA75.17 (2022)), including the joint work of WHO, the International Labour Organization and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on the Working for Health 2022–2030 Action Plan and its Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

13. Draft global traditional medicine strategy (2025–2034)

In decision WHA76(20) (2023) the Health Assembly decided to extend the WHO traditional medicine strategy to 2025. In response to the request to draft a new global strategy on traditional medicine for the period 2025–2034 in consultation with Member States and relevant stakeholders, the Director-General will submit the draft strategy for consideration by the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly through the Board.

14. Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health

Pursuant to resolution WHA69.2 (2016), in which the Health Assembly requested the Director-General to report regularly on progress towards women's, children's and adolescents' health, this report will provide a summary of recent trends and data and outline the Organization's efforts to accelerate progress towards women's, children's and adolescents' health.

Pillar 2: One billion more people better protected from health emergencies

15. WHO's work in health emergencies

In his report, the Director-General will describe WHO's response in 2024 to 45 health emergencies across 87 countries and territories and the concurrent operational challenges. WHO will continue to coordinate the health response, collaborate with partners, provide support to Member States in building critical capacities, and advocate for sustainable financing to address the increasing humanitarian health needs. The Board will be invited to note the report and provide guidance on how to meet demand within challenging operational and funding environments.

16. Implementation of resolution WHA75.11 (2022)

Pursuant to decision WHA77(17) (2024) on Health emergency in Ukraine and refugee-receiving and -hosting countries, stemming from the Russian Federation's aggression, the Director-General will submit to the Board a report on the Secretariat's response on the implementation of resolution WHA75.11 (2022). The report will detail the impacts on health and WHO's support to the health sector. The Board will be invited to take note of the report.

17. Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem

In decision WHA77(18) (2024), the Health Assembly requested the Director-General to report on the public health implications of the catastrophic humanitarian crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and to submit recommendations in this regard to the Board, bearing in mind the legal obligations of the occupying power. The Director-General will submit such a report, which will detail findings based on continuous monitoring and management of public health risks by the WHO emergency teams and in coordination with health partners. The Board will be invited to note the report.

18. Universal Health and Preparedness Review

As requested in decision WHA77(10) (2024) on Universal Health and Preparedness Review, the Director-General will submit a report on the lessons learned, implications, benefits, challenges and options for the next steps. The Board will be invited to note the report.

19. Poliomyelitis

The Director-General will submit an update on progress on poliovirus containment in line with resolution WHA71.16 (2018) and on work towards fully implementing and financing all aspects of the Polio Eradication Strategy and the Polio Transition Strategic Framework to achieve eradication and prepare for a lasting polio-free world. The Board will be invited to note the report and provide guidance on measures to ensure that zero-dose children are reached with polio vaccine, to ensure poliovirus containment, to secure the financial resources required to implement the Polio Eradication Strategy and to prepare for and sustain a polio-free world.

Pillar 3: One billion more people enjoying better health and well-being

20. The impact of chemicals, waste and pollution on human health

In resolution WHA76.17 (2023), the Health Assembly requested the Director-General to submit a report on the outcome of the intersessional process to prepare recommendations on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 for consideration by the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly through the Board, along with a report on any updates needed to the WHO road map to enhance the engagement of the health sector in the new instrument.

21. Updated road map for an enhanced global response to the adverse health effects of air pollution

The road map for an enhanced global response to the adverse health effects of air pollution provides a mechanism for health sector response to address the health effects of air pollution through knowledge synthesis, enhanced monitoring, institutional capacity strengthening and global leadership. The Director-General will submit a report on the road map's implementation, updates and alignment with organizational priorities.

22. Climate change and health

Pursuant to the request in resolution WHA77.14 (2024), the Director-General will submit a report on implementing the resolution and provide a draft global WHO plan of action on climate change and health. The Board will be invited to provide feedback on the plan for consideration by the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly.

Pillar 4: More effective and efficient WHO providing better support to countries

23. Budget and finance matters

23.1 Financing and implementation of the Programme budget 2024–2025

The Director-General will submit a report on the financing and implementation of the Programme budget 2024–2025. The Board will be invited to note the report and provide further guidance. In line with decision WHA69(8) (2016), an information document will be submitted containing the preliminary findings of the 2025 country presence report and highlighting progress in strengthening WHO country offices.

23.2 Proposed programme budget 2026–2027

The Director-General will submit the first draft of the Proposed programme budget 2026–2027. The Board will be invited to discuss the proposed draft and provide guidance for finalization by the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly. Intersessional meetings with Member States are expected to be held between January and April 2025 to receive updates as needed.

23.3 Scale of assessments 2026–2027 [if any]

23.4 Amendments to the Financial Regulations and Financial Rules [if any]

24. Management and governance matters

24.1 Prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment

The Director-General will submit a report on the implementation of WHO's three-year strategy for preventing and responding to sexual misconduct, highlighting progress made to date. The report will also outline for consideration of the Board proposed options for ensuring Member States' accountability for safeguarding joint operations by governments and WHO against sexual misconduct, as recommended to the Health Assembly by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board on behalf of the Board.

24.2 Governance reform

- Member State-led governance reform

The leads of Member State-led governance reform will be invited to report on progress made towards tracking the achievement of, and/or implementing, the remaining recommendations of the Agile Member States Task Group on Strengthening WHO's Budgetary, Programmatic and Financing Governance, as requested by the Board in decision EB154(5) (2024), including on the design of the pathway for governing body reform.

- Process for handling and investigating potential allegations against WHO Directors-General

The leads for Member State-led governance reform will be invited to submit finalized draft procedures for consideration by the Board, as requested in decision EB155(12) (2024). The Board will be invited to consider the procedures, to provide further guidance and to make a recommendation to the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly in line with decision WHA77(15) (2024).

- Draft terms of reference to strengthen the effectiveness of the functioning of the Officers of the Executive Board

In accordance with decision EB154(3) (2024) on proposals for improving the effectiveness of WHO's governing bodies, the Director-General, having consulted Member States, will submit for the Board's consideration draft terms of reference to strengthen the effectiveness of the functioning of the Officers of the Executive Board.

- Secretariat Implementation Plan on reform

The Director-General will submit a report on continued progress in following up on the Secretariat's implementation plan on reform, as proposed by the Secretariat and endorsed by the Board in decision EB152(16) (2023).

- Involvement of non-State actors in WHO's governing bodies

In response to decision EB152(29) (2023) regarding the continued implementation of constituency statements by non-State actors during all WHO's governing bodies meetings and its reporting request, the Director-General will submit a report on the outcome of consultations with Member States and non-State actors on improving the modalities of such statements. The report will propose that implementation of the constituency statements by non-State actors continues as before.

24.3 Global strategies or action plans that are scheduled to expire within one year¹

- Global strategic directions for nursing and midwifery 2021–2025

The Director-General will submit a report that takes stock of progress by Member States, partners and the Secretariat in implementing the global strategic directions for nursing and midwifery 2021–2025, adopted in resolution WHA74.15 (2021). The Board will be invited to consider a draft decision to extend the global strategic directions for nursing and midwifery 2021–2025 until 2030.

- Global strategy on digital health 2020–2025

The Director-General will submit a progress report on the implementation of the global strategy on digital health 2020–2025 with details of actions taken by Member States, development partners and the Secretariat. The Board will be invited to note the report and to consider a draft decision recommending the extension of the global strategy to pave the way for the development of a new updated draft strategy.

- Global action plan on the public health response to dementia 2017–2025

The Director-General will submit a report informing Member States that progress towards the targets outlined in the global action plan has been slow. The Board will be invited to note the report and consider whether the global action plan should be extended beyond 2025.

- Comprehensive implementation plan on maternal, infant and young child nutrition

The report will summarize the progress towards the global nutrition targets and the achievements of the comprehensive implementation plan. The Board will be invited to decide whether to recommend extension of the action plan and its targets until 2030 in order to align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

¹ Substantive items are included in line with decision WHA73(15) (2020) on WHO reform: governance in order to allow Member States to consider whether global strategies or action plans have fulfilled their mandates, should be extended and/or need to be adjusted.

24.4 Engagement with non-State actors

- Report on the implementation of the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors

In accordance with resolution WHA69.10 (2016) on the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors and paragraph 68(a) of the latter, the Director-General will submit the ninth annual report on WHO's implementation of the Framework, illustrating engagements with entities and reporting on the different aspects of the implementation of the Framework at the three levels of the Organization. The Board will be invited to note the report.

- Non-State actors in official relations with WHO

In line with the provisions of the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors, the Executive Board is mandated, through its Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, to consider applications for admittance of non-State actors into official relations and to review collaboration with one third of the non-State actors in official relations in order to decide whether to maintain, defer the review or discontinue their official relations. The Board will be invited to note the report and to consider a draft decision.

24.5 International Health Regulations (2005): proposed procedure for the correction of errors in the text of the instrument

The Director-General will submit a correction procedure to address translation errors identified in the original text of the International Health Regulations (2005) for consideration by the Board.

25. Provisional agenda of the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly and date and place of the 157th session of the Executive Board

The Board will consider a draft decision on the date and place of the 157th session of the Executive Board.

26. Committees of the Executive Board

26.1 Foundation committees and selection panels

In his role as Secretary of the selection panels, the Director-General will submit, on their behalf, reports summarizing the recommendations of the selection panels and key relevant information about the recommended candidates for the five Public Health Prizes and Award to be awarded at the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly. The Board will be invited to decide who the recipients of the awards will be.

26.2 Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee: membership renewal [if any]

26.3 Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response

Two reports will be submitted to the Board: the first will address the dates for the sixth meeting of the Standing Committee and the second will describe the findings of the review on the functioning and impact of the Standing Committee.

27. Staffing matters

27.1 Appointment of the Regional Director for Africa

Consultations on the process to be followed for the appointment of the Regional Director for Africa are ongoing at the time of this document's publication. Documentation will be provided, as appropriate.

27.2 Appointment of the Regional Director for Europe

The Regional Committee's proposal for the appointment of the Regional Director will be transmitted to the Board for its consideration. The Board will be invited to consider a draft resolution.

27.3 Statement by the representative of the WHO staff associations

In a statement to the Board, the representative of the staff associations of WHO, IARC, PAHO and UNAIDS will highlight the views of the members on issues currently seen as of great importance for the Organization.

27.4 Report of the Ombudsperson

As part of the Ombudsperson's accountability, the WHO Ombudsperson reports annually to the Executive Board on the nature and scope of their activities. Their report will outline the most relevant systemic issues identified during 2024, focusing on how the perennial issues of sustainable funding and contracting modalities impact the workforce and challenge efforts to promote a harmonious working environment.

27.5 Human resources: update

The Director-General will submit an update to the human resources annual report for 2023 noted by the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly in May 2024. The report will summarize workforce data and describe activities conducted under the human resources strategy and within the major transformation workstreams. In response to resolution WHA74.8 (2021), the Director-General will also present a report describing the progress WHO has made on the implementation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy from 2019 to mid-2024. The Board will be invited to note the reports.

27.6 Amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules

Amendments to the Staff Rules made by the Director-General will be submitted for confirmation by the Board in accordance with Staff Regulation 12.2. Proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations will be submitted to the Board for its consideration and for further submission to the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly.

27.7 Report of the International Civil Service Commission

The Director-General will transmit the Commission's report and recommendations to the Board. The Secretariat will provide the Board with a verbal summary of the salient points. The Board will be invited to note the report.

28. Report on meetings of expert committees and study groups

- Expert advisory panels and committees and their membership

In compliance with Regulation 4.23 of the Regulations for Expert Advisory Panels and Committees, the Director-General will submit a report on meetings of expert committees and study groups, including a summary of the recommendations contained in the reports of expert committees and observations on their significance for public health policies and implications for the Organization's programmes. The Board will be invited to note the report. In addition, the Director-General will provide details of both meetings and membership in respect of expert committees that met in 2024.

29. Closure of the session

Note:²

1. The Officers of the Executive Board met with the Director-General on 8 October 2024. The meeting was held virtually using video conference technology. As the post of Vice-Chair for the South-East Asia Region was vacant, Dr Khadeeja Abdul Samad Abdulla, Minister of State for Health, Maldives, observed in place of the first Vice-Chair. As the Rapporteur from Yemen was unable to attend, Mr Yahya Arrafiq, First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Yemen, observed in place of the Rapporteur.

Purpose of the meeting

2. In accordance with Rule 8 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, the meeting would review the existing draft provisional agenda of the 156th session of the Board, to be held in February 2025, together with proposals received for additional items, in order to prepare the provisional agenda. In line with Rule 9 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, any proposal for a new item should be accompanied by an explanatory memorandum. As part of recent governance reforms efforts, the Secretariat had provided Member States with an updated model memorandum.

3. The meeting opened with a welcome from the Director-General to the Chair and other Officers.

4. The Chair of the Executive Board chaired the meeting. In his opening comments, he welcomed the Officers. He also noted that Regional Coordinators had been invited to attend as observers.

5. The Officers agreed to the proposed method of work. At the proposal of the Chair, they also agreed to discuss together the items on (a) the prioritization of proposals for the provisional agenda of the 156th session of the Executive Board and (b) the preparation of that agenda.

Provisional agenda of the 156th session of the Executive Board

6. The Chair informed the Officers that 17 proposals for nine new agenda items had been received from Member States by the deadline of 24 September 2024 and included an explanatory memorandum.

7. In addition, two proposals had been received from Member States by the deadline but without an explanatory memorandum. One involved a correction to the draft provisional agenda that the Secretariat would propose should be corrected. A further two proposals had been received after the deadline but concerned topics that had been proposed by other Member States.

8. The Chair pointed out that the draft provisional agenda was very heavy, not only in terms of the number of items it contained but also the density of each item.

9. The Chair reminded Officers of the template, requested by the Executive Board at its 144th session, which invited the Officers to consider several elements, including whether the proposed items addressed a global public health issue, a new subject within the scope of WHO, or an issue representing a significant public health burden. The template also asked the Officers to consider the last time the proposed item was considered by the governing bodies, work performed currently by WHO in relation to the proposed item, and the existence of reporting requirements in relation to the proposed item.

10. The Chair proposed that, following their review, the Officers should decide to recommend one of five options:

Option 1: accept the proposal as a new agenda item

² See the [Note for the Record](#) of the meeting of the Director-General with the Officers of the Executive Board on 8 October 2024.

Option 2: combine the proposed item with an existing item

Option 3: defer the proposed item to a later session

Option 4: refer the proposal to another governing body, such as the regional committees or the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board

Option 5: not include the proposal on the agenda of the Executive Board at its 156th session.

11. The Chair also drew the Officers' attention to a few proposals from the Secretariat.
12. The Officers of the Board agreed to make the **recommendations** set forth below:

Pillar 1: One billion more people benefiting from universal health coverage

- that the item proposed by the Governments of Belize, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, the Gambia, Honduras and Uganda on self-care should be **combined with the existing item** on universal health coverage, as the report that the Secretariat was preparing on universal health coverage would include self-care;
- that the item proposed by the Government of Oman on health insurance models and their impact on healthcare should also be **combined with the existing item** on universal health coverage. Matters on health insurance and other approaches towards financing protection were managed by the Secretariat in the Health Financing and Economics department in the Universal Health Coverage Division. Thus the issue of health insurance models and their impact on healthcare would be addressed in the Secretariat report on universal health coverage;
- that the item proposed by the Government of Malawi on elimination of onchocerciasis transmission should **not be included on the agenda of the Executive Board at its 156th session**, as onchocerciasis would be considered as part of the governing bodies' consideration of the implementation of the road map for neglected tropical diseases 2021–2030 in 2026, in line with the reporting requirements in decision WHA73(33) (2020). The proposal made reference to resolution WHA47.32 (1994) on onchocerciasis control through ivermectin distribution, which was sunset by decision WHA74(17) (2021) on governance reform, on the understanding that resolution WHA47.32 had been superseded by decision WHA73(33) on the road map for neglected tropical diseases 2021–2030;
- that the item proposed by the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria on skin diseases as a global public health priority should be **accepted** as part of the reporting on a new agenda item on communicable diseases. The addition of an item on communicable diseases would allow such diseases to be grouped together, similar to the proposed grouping of neglected tropical diseases under one broad item. The existing item on the global road map on defeating meningitis by 2030 could be included as a bullet point under the new item on communicable diseases;
- that the item proposed by the Government of Thailand on addressing the burden of leptospirosis should be **accepted** as part of the reporting on the new item on communicable diseases;
- that the item proposed by the Government of Chile on mental health should be **accepted** onto the **provisional agenda of the 156th session of the Board** as a stand-alone item, given the importance of the issue globally;³

³ See the Officers' updated recommendation in paragraph 19.

- that the item proposed by the Governments of Chile and the United States of America on the health impacts of social connection, loneliness and isolation should be **accepted** as part of the reporting on the new item on mental health and social connection. It was considered important to link the new item with existing instruments, such as the comprehensive mental health action plan 2013–2030, which was on the draft provisional agenda of the 156th session of the Board;⁴
- that the item proposed by the Governments of Benin and Kenya on the establishment of a World Maternal Mortality Prevention Day should be **accepted** as part of the reporting on a new agenda item on the Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health (2016–2030), given the urgent need to address maternal mortality in many countries. Proposals to establish a world health day would generally be considered when the relevant topic was discussed by the governing bodies, rather than as a stand-alone item. Following the Board’s discussion on establishing a World Maternal Mortality Prevention Day, as part of its consideration of the Global Strategy, any proposal would be discussed intersessionally before a final decision would be taken by the Health Assembly, in line with the procedure outlined in the Director-General’s report on world health days (document A74/9 Add.2). A report on the Global Strategy would next be considered by the Health Assembly in 2025; however, given the urgency of the issue, the reporting should be brought forward to the Executive Board at its 156th session;
- that the Secretariat’s proposal to remove the bullet point on primary healthcare under the existing item on universal health coverage should **not be accepted**. The proposal had been made as primary healthcare would be fully covered in the report on universal health coverage. It would nevertheless be appropriate to highlight primary healthcare, as a strong foundation of primary healthcare leads to universal health coverage. There could still be one report on universal health coverage, with a strong component on primary healthcare;

Pillar 2: One billion more people better protected from health emergencies

- that the item proposed by the Government of the United States of America on influenza preparedness should be **combined with the existing item** on WHO’s work in health emergencies. The important and timely issue of influenza preparedness would therefore be included in the Secretariat’s report on WHO’s work in health emergencies;
- that the Secretariat’s proposal to correct the title of the existing item “Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan”, by removing the reference to the Syrian Golan, should be **accepted**. Inclusion of the occupied Syrian Golan was an error, as the item was in response to the reporting requirement in resolution WHA77.16 (2024) on health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem. A report on health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan would be submitted to the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly in 2025, in line with decision WHA77(18) (2024);

Pillar 3: One billion more people enjoying better health and well-being

- that the Secretariat’s proposal to include a new agenda item on climate change should be **accepted** onto the **provisional agenda of the 156th session of the Board** in order to ensure that good governance practice would be followed. Through resolution WHA77.14 (2024), the Health Assembly requested the Director-General to develop a global WHO plan of action on climate change and health for consideration by the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly in 2025. Inclusion of the item on the provisional agenda of the 156th session of the Board would give the Board the opportunity to consider the plan of action before its consideration by the Health Assembly;

⁴ See the Officers’ updated recommendation in paragraph 19.

Pillar 4: More effective and efficient WHO providing better support to countries

- that the Secretariat’s proposal to include a bullet point on involvement of non-State actors in WHO’s governing bodies under the existing item on governance reform should be **accepted**, in line with the reporting requirement in decision EB152(29) (2023). The results of the Secretariat’s first consultation with Member States and non-State actors in official relations with WHO aimed at improving the modalities related to the implementation of constituency statements during all WHO governing body meetings should be submitted for consideration by the Board at its 156th session;
- that the Secretariat’s proposal to include two bullet points – “Global action plan on the public health response to dementia 2017–2025” and “Comprehensive implementation plan on maternal, infant and young child nutrition” – under the existing item on global strategies or action plans that are scheduled to expire within one year should be **accepted**, as they had been inadvertently omitted from the draft provisional agenda. The global action plan on the public health response to dementia was endorsed through decision WHA70(17) (2017); the comprehensive implementation plan on maternal, infant and young child nutrition was endorsed through resolution WHA65.6 (2012), with a 13-year time frame of 2012 to 2025. Both should be included on the provisional agenda so that the Board could decide whether the action plan and implementation plan had been fulfilled, should be extended or should be modified in some way;
- that the Secretariat’s proposal to add an item “International Health Regulations (2005): proposed translation corrections in text not covered by resolution WHA77.17 (2024)” should be **accepted** onto the **provisional agenda of the 156th session of the Board**, in order to prepare for the Health Assembly’s consideration of the item. Following adoption of the amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) annexed to resolution WHA77.17, the Secretariat had engaged with States Parties to the Regulations to receive their inputs on language conformity and accuracy of the 2024 amendments, resulting in some adjustments of the translations of the 2024 amendments. During that process, several translation errors were identified in the original text of the Regulations from 2005. As there was no mandate from the Health Assembly to address the translation errors in the original text of the Regulations, the Secretariat proposed to correct those errors through language corrections following a procedure to be determined, mandated by the Health Assembly, based on a procedure foreseen by the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties and in line with United Nations practice. In parallel, the Secretariat would also consult informally with Member States to ensure that the Secretariat and Member States were fully aligned on the necessary language corrections.

Next steps

13. The Secretariat indicated that the provisional agenda, annotated provisional agenda and notice of convocation would be dispatched eight weeks before the start of the 156th session of the Board. The Secretariat also gave an assurance that it would inform the Member States that had made proposals, on the basis of the Officers’ recommendations.

Update on Governance reform

14. The Secretariat reminded the Officers that an item on governance reform was included on draft provisional agenda of the 156th session of the Board and that one of the bullet points under that item was draft terms of reference to strengthen the effectiveness of the functioning of the Officers of the Board. Through decision EB154(3) (2024), the Board requested the Director-General to prepare, in consultation with Member States, draft terms of reference, which would be submitted for consideration by the Board at its 156th session.

15. The Secretariat held an initial informal consultation with Member States on 23 September 2024 to seek their views on what should be included in the terms of reference, such as setting out the general responsibilities and roles of the Officers of the Board. The general responsibilities could include chairing meetings, facilitating collaboration, and committing the time needed to provide leadership on technical and policy discussions. Roles in management of resolutions and decisions to be submitted to the Board and a role in regional representation in consultation with the regional coordinators could be considered.

16. Clear feedback was received with respect to some topics: some Member States strongly opposed establishing any roles or responsibilities that would require making changes to the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board; and no support was expressed for a regional representation role by the Officers.

17. The Secretariat was collecting any written comments from Member States in response to the initial consultation. Taking into account the feedback and comments received, the Secretariat would prepare draft terms of reference, which would be discussed with Member States at a further informal consultation during the fourth week of November 2024. In the light of any feedback received, the Secretariat would revise the draft terms of reference and submit them for the Board's consideration at its 156th session.

Additional recommendations by the Officers following an email consultation after the 8 October 2024 meeting⁵

18. On 23 October 2024, through a communication from the Chair, the Officers were informed that another proposal for a new agenda item had been submitted on time and with an explanatory memorandum. However, due to a technical glitch the proposal had not initially been identified as a proposal for a new agenda item. The Officers decided to recommend that the proposal, by the Government of Brazil, on regulating the digital marketing of breast-milk substitutes should **not be included on the agenda of the Executive Board at its 156th session** as that subject would be covered as part of the governing bodies' consideration of maternal, infant and young child nutrition in 2026, in accordance with the streamlined reporting requirements in decision WHA73(26) (2020). The report that would be considered by the Board in 2026 would include reporting on the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes. It was also noted that the governing bodies in 2024 had considered a report on the development of guidance on regulatory measures aimed at restricting digital marketing of breast-milk substitutes, in line with decision WHA75(21) (2022). The guidance was developed in 2023 and was published on the WHO website.⁶

19. Through the same communication of 23 October 2024, the Chair recalled that during the meeting on 8 October 2024, the Officers had decided to recommend that the two proposals submitted by the Governments of Chile and the United States of America on the subject matter of "mental health" and "the health impacts of social connection, loneliness and isolation" should be combined. The Chair pointed out that current reporting on the subject matter of mental health was included in annual reports on noncommunicable diseases, in accordance with decision WHA72(11) (2019), through which the Director-General was requested to consolidate reporting on the progress achieved in the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and the promotion of mental health, with an annual report to be submitted to the Health Assembly through the Board, from 2021 to 2031. The Chair indicated that he understood that some Member States intended to propose a decision point to Health Assembly through the Board requesting the Director-General to report on the subject matter of mental health annually as a separate agenda item. However, until such a decision was agreed by the Health Assembly, a separate item entitled "Mental health" could be perceived as conflicting with decision WHA72(11). In that regard, the Officers decided to recommend that **the title of the relevant item on the provisional agenda** of the 156th session of the Board **should be "Mental health and social connection"**. The same combined content that had been discussed at the meeting on 8 October 2024 would be maintained.

⁵ The communication was sent by the Chair on 23 October 2024 by email to the Officers of the Board. The deadline for feedback was 30 October 2024.

⁶ See <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/374182>.