REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

Seventieth session
Virtual session, 25 August 2020

DRAFT DECISION 2 ON THE SPECIAL PROCEDURES TO REGULATE THE CONDUCT OF THE VIRTUAL SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE

The Seventieth session of the Regional Committee for Africa,

1. ADOPTS the special procedures to regulate the conduct of the virtual Regional Committee as set out in Annex 1 to this decision; and
2. DECIDES that the said special procedures shall apply to the Seventieth session of the Regional Committee for Africa to be held on 25 August 2020.
Annex 1

Special procedures to regulate the conduct of the virtual session of the Regional Committee for Africa

RULES OF PROCEDURE

1. The Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Africa shall continue to apply in full, except to the extent that they are inconsistent with these special procedures, in which case the Regional Committee’s decision to adopt these special procedures shall operate as a decision to suspend the relevant Rules of Procedure to the extent necessary in accordance with Rule 53 of the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Africa.¹

ATTENDANCE AND QUORUM

2. Attendance by Member States, Associate Members, committees of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and other regional international organizations and economic communities having interests in common with the World Health Organization shall be through a secured access to videoconference or other electronic means allowing representatives to hear other participants and to address the meeting remotely.

3. Attendance by nongovernmental organizations shall be through electronic means allowing representatives to hear other participants.

4. For the avoidance of doubt, virtual attendance of representatives shall be taken into account when calculating the presence of a quorum.

ADDRESSING THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE

5. Member States and Associate Members, committees of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and other regional international organizations and economic communities having interests in common with the World Health Organization and nongovernmental organizations are invited to post written statements of no more than 600 words in one of the official languages of the African Region on the website under the special session on COVID-19 in advance of the opening of the Regional Committee.

6. Heads of Member State and Associate Member delegations shall also have the opportunity, if they so wish, to submit pre-recorded video statements of no more than two minutes in duration in advance of the opening of the session, if possible, by Friday 14 August 2020. Those video statements will be broadcast at the virtual meeting in lieu of a live intervention under the item on COVID-19.

¹ This will affect notably the relevant provisions of the following Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Africa:
- Rule 3 (Credentials);
- Rule 10 (Officers of the Committee, insofar as Rule 10 concerns the Chairperson);
- Rule 20 (Final Report);
- Rules 45, 48 through 51 (voting by show of hands and secret ballot);
- Rule 54 (amendments of and addition to the Rules of Procedure) insofar as these Special Procedures may be regarded as amendments of or addition to the Rules of Procedure and to the extent that Rule 54 requires receipt and consideration of a report thereon by an appropriate subcommittee.
7. Written and video statements, in the language of submission, shall remain posted on the website of the Regional Office until the adoption of the final report of the Regional Committee which will reflect the debate in accordance with the usual practice.

8. During the virtual session Member States, Associate Members, invited representatives of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and other regional international organizations and economic communities having interests in common with the World Health Organization shall be provided with the opportunity to take the floor. Individual statements will be limited to two minutes and; regional and group statements will be limited to four minutes. Any representative wishing to take the floor should signal their wish to speak through an online tool.

OFFICERS

9. For the purpose of the Seventieth session of the Regional Committee, the Chairperson of the Sixty-ninth Regional Committee may be re-elected as Chairperson of the Seventieth session of the Regional Committee.

COMMITTEES

10. All business shall be conducted in plenary. Accordingly, the Committee on Credentials shall not be established. Credentials shall be considered as set out below.

REGISTRATION AND CREDENTIALS

11. Online registration will follow normal practice. Additional information is provided in the related Note verbale.

12. In accordance with Rule 3 the names of representatives, including all alternates, advisers and secretaries which shall take the form of credentials issued by Heads of State, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Ministers of Health or any other appropriate authority shall be communicated electronically to the Regional Director if possible, no later than 20 August 2020. Given the need to facilitate virtual access to the meeting, all credentials and lists of representatives, including all alternates, advisers and secretaries, should be submitted electronically.

13. The Chairperson of the Sixty-ninth session of the Regional Committee having assessed, before the opening and during the Seventieth session, whether credentials of representatives including all alternates, advisers and secretaries are in conformity with the requirements of the Rules of Procedure, shall report to the Regional Committee accordingly at the opening and at any given time as may be needed with a view to the Regional Committee making a decision thereon.

14. The Chairperson of the Seventieth Regional Committee shall be invited, before the opening of a resumed session, to assess whether new or revised credentials from Members are in conformity with the requirements of the Rules of Procedure and shall report to the Regional Committee accordingly with a view to the Regional Committee making a decision thereon.

MEETINGS

15. All meetings of the Regional Committee shall be held in public. The virtual Regional Committee shall be broadcast on the Regional Office website.

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2 Modalities for taking the floor will depend on the platform used for the virtual meeting and will be communicated in due course.
DECISION-MAKING

16. All decisions of the Regional Committee taken in virtual sessions should as far as possible be by consensus. In any event, given the virtual nature of the session, no decision shall be taken by a show of hands vote or by secret ballot.

LANGUAGES

17. For the avoidance of doubt, Rule 23 continues to apply, whereby speeches made in an official language shall be interpreted into the other official languages.

FINAL REPORT

18. Following the suspension and/or closure of the session, the Secretariat shall prepare and share electronically a draft final report for consideration of and comments from the representatives of Member States and Associate Members. Comments shall be sent electronically to the Secretariat at the following email address afrgorc.registration@who.int not later than fourteen days from the date of dispatch of the draft final report. The Secretariat, following consultations with the Chairperson of the Regional Committee, shall finalize the final report and publish it on the website of the Regional Office.