



Nomination of the Regional Director

1. This document provides background information about, and a summary of the Regional Committee's role in, the nomination of the Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean.
2. Article 52 of the WHO Constitution provides that: "The head of the regional office shall be the Regional Director appointed by the Board in agreement with the regional committee".
3. The term of office of the incumbent Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, Dr Ahmed Salim Al-Mandhari, comes to an end on 31 January 2024.
4. Therefore, in order to enable the Executive Board, at its 154th session in January 2024, to consider the appointment of the Regional Director as from 1 February 2024, the Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean is requested to consider the nomination of the Regional Director at its 70th session on 9–12 October 2023, and to make its recommendation to the Executive Board.

Background

5. Article 52 of the WHO Constitution has been implemented in WHO in the following manner. The Regional Committee for each region has adopted rules of procedure governing how it nominates a candidate to the post of Regional Director. In the case of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, this procedure is set out in Rule 51 of the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee (attached as Annex 1). The Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board set out how the Board then decides on the appointment of a person thus nominated by a Regional Committee. The Board's Rules of Procedure provide that the term of office of a person appointed as Regional Director is to be five years, renewable once only.
6. The Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean formally revised the process for the nomination of the Regional Director at its 59th session in 2012. The Regional Committee aligned itself with the approach used for the nomination of the Director-General by the Executive Board since 1998, by providing for a shortlisting process in the event that there are more than five candidatures and by providing for interviews of candidates.¹
7. The Sixty-fifth Health Assembly in 2012 requested the Regional Committees to harmonize certain elements of their procedures and to align them to those adopted by the Executive Board and Health Assembly. With regard to the nomination of the Regional Director, the Health Assembly requested that, in line with principles of fairness, accountability and transparency, the Regional Committee establish criteria for the selection of candidates and a process for assessment of all candidates' qualifications.² The Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean accordingly set six criteria for assessing candidates for the post of the Regional Director (attached as Annex 2).³ The Regional Committee is invited to take these into account when carrying out the process of nominating a candidate.

The procedure in advance of the Regional Committee

8. On 4 April 2023, the Director-General informed each Member State of the Region that he would receive, for consideration by the Regional Committee, any proposals from Member States for the names of candidates, provided these reached the Director-General in Geneva, Switzerland, no later than the close of

¹ See Decision no. 3 contained in document EM/RC59/13.

² See Decision WHA65(9).

³ See Decision no. 3 contained in document EM/RC59/13.

business on 14 July 2023. In addition, Member States were informed that the proposal of a candidate must be accompanied by the details of each candidate's qualifications and experience. On 28 July 2023, the Director-General communicated to Member States of the Region the names of the six candidates that he had received by the deadline together with the curricula vitae and other supporting material submitted by Member States.

The procedure during the Regional Committee

9. The procedure during the Regional Committee consists of three stages:

- establishment of the shortlist in the event that there are more than five candidates;
- candidate interviews;
- vote to nominate a candidate.

10. Since six proposals were received by the Director-General, the Regional Committee will have to establish a shortlist in accordance with paragraph f bis) of Rule 51. The three stages of the nomination process that the Committee will have to undertake are therefore as follows.

Establishment of a shortlist

11. In the event that more than five candidates are proposed, the Committee is to draw up a shortlist of candidates at the commencement of its session. For this purpose, the Committee shall hold a secret ballot, and the five candidates obtaining the highest number of votes shall make up the shortlist. In the event of a tie between two or more candidates such that there are more than five candidates identified for inclusion on the shortlist, there shall be additional ballots between the candidates receiving the tied votes, with those receiving the highest number of votes filling the remaining place or places on the shortlist.

Candidate interviews

12. Pursuant to the rules of procedure as revised by the Regional Committee in 2012, candidates shall be interviewed by the Committee as soon as possible. The interview shall consist of a presentation by each candidate in addition to answers to questions from members. The Regional Committee shall determine, as appropriate, modalities for the interviews. In this regard, the Committee may wish to follow the proposed modalities set out in Annex 3 to this document. Such proposed modalities are in line with the approach followed by the Regional Committee at its 63rd session as well as the approach followed since 1998 by the Executive Board for the nomination of the Director-General and the approach followed by other regional committees with only minor technical variations.

13. Subject to confirmation by the Regional Committee, it is anticipated that the interviews will take place on the afternoon of Tuesday, 10 October.

Vote to nominate a candidate

14. The final stage involves voting to nominate the candidate whose name is to be submitted to the Executive Board for appointment. The procedure for this stage is set out in paragraphs g) to i) of Rule 51 of the Rules of Procedure.

15. In summary, each representative places the name of one candidate on his or her ballot paper. If no candidate receives a majority of votes from the representatives present and voting,¹ the candidate receiving

¹ Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee provides that decisions of the Committee shall be made by a majority of the representatives present and voting which, in accordance with Rule 41, means that abstentions are not counted in calculating the required majority. Consequently, if all 21 representatives entitled to vote cast a valid ballot and none abstains, the required majority is 11. Should five representatives abstain, for example, the members present and voting would be 16 and the required majority would be 9.

the least number of votes is eliminated at each ballot until a candidate receives the required majority. Rule 51 provides a specific procedure to deal with persistent tied votes between two sole remaining candidates. Subject to confirmation by the Regional Committee, it is anticipated that voting to nominate a candidate will take place on the afternoon of Tuesday, 10 October, immediately following the interviews.

16. Rule 56 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board provides that the appointment of a Regional Director shall be for five years. The Regional Committee therefore does not need to make any recommendation in this regard.

Annex 1. Rules of procedure of the Regional Committee

Rule 51

- a) Not less than six months before the date fixed for the opening of a session of the Committee at which a person is due to be nominated as Regional Director, the Director-General shall inform each Member State of the Region that he or she will receive proposals of names of candidates for nomination by the Committee as Regional Director.
- b) Any Member State of the Region may propose the name of one or more persons from within the Region who has indicated willingness to act as Regional Director, submitting with the proposal particulars of the person's qualifications and experience. Member States shall be mindful of the Code of Conduct adopted by the Regional Committee and shall bring it to the attention of such persons. Such proposals shall be sent to the Director-General so as to reach him or her not less than twelve weeks before the date fixed for the opening of the session.
- c) A person holding office as Regional Director for the Region shall be a candidate for nomination without being proposed under the preceding paragraph if he or she has indicated to the Director-General a willingness to be nominated.
- d) The Director-General shall, not less than ten weeks before the date fixed for the opening of the session, cause copies of all proposals for nomination as Regional Director (with particulars of qualifications and experience) received by him or her within the period specified to be sent to each Member State whether or not the person holding the office is a candidate for nomination.
- e) If no proposals have been received by the Director-General in time for transmission to Member States in accordance with this Rule, they shall be informed accordingly not less than ten weeks before the opening of the session of the Committee. The Committee shall itself establish a list of candidates composed of the names proposed in secret by the representatives present and entitled to vote.
- f) If the Regional Director is unable to perform the functions of his or her office or if his or her office becomes vacant before his or her term of office is completed, the Committee shall nominate a person for the post of Regional Director at its next session, provided that the other provisions of this Rule are met. If the other provisions of this Rule cannot be met, the Committee shall take a decision at its next session or in a special session with a view to nominating a person and submitting his or her name to the Executive Board as soon as possible. In the interim, the Director-General shall designate an acting Regional Director until the appointment of the new incumbent.
 - f bis) If the Director-General receives more than five proposals within the period specified in paragraph (b) of this Rule, the Committee shall draw up a shortlist of five candidates at a private meeting at the commencement of its session. For this purpose, the Committee shall hold a secret ballot, and the five candidates obtaining the highest number of votes shall make up the shortlist. In the event of a tie between two or more candidates such that there are more than five candidates identified for inclusion on the shortlist, there shall be additional ballots between the candidates receiving the tie votes, with those receiving the highest number of votes filling the remaining place or places on the shortlist.
 - f ter) The persons proposed in accordance with paragraph (b) of this Rule, or – in case of the preceding paragraph (f bis) being applicable – those persons on the shortlist, shall be interviewed by the Committee as soon as possible at a private meeting. The interview shall consist of a presentation by each candidate in addition to answers to questions from members. The Committee shall determine, as appropriate, modalities for the interviews.

- g) The nomination of the Regional Director shall take place at a private meeting of the Committee. The Committee shall make a selection from among the persons who are candidates under this Rule. The nomination of the Regional Director shall be decided by secret ballot.
- h) For this purpose each representative entitled to vote shall write on his or her ballot paper the name of a single candidate chosen from the above-mentioned list. If no candidate obtains the majority required, the candidate who obtains the least number of votes shall be eliminated at each ballot. If the number of the candidates is reduced to two, there shall be not more than three further ballots. In the event of a tie after the third such ballot, the whole voting procedure Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean established by this Rule shall be recommenced based on the shortlist of candidates.
- i) The name of the person so nominated shall be announced at a public meeting of the Regional Committee and submitted to the Executive Board.
- j) The appointment of the Regional Director shall be for five years and he or she shall be eligible for reappointment once only.

Annex 2. Criteria for assessing candidates for the post of the Regional Director

1. A strong technical and public health background and extensive experience in global health;
2. Competency in organizational management;
3. Proven historical evidence for public health leadership;
4. Sensitivity to cultural, social and political differences;
5. A strong commitment to the work of WHO;
6. The good physical condition required of all staff members of the Organization.

ANNEX 3. Proposed modalities for the interview of candidates for the post of Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Region

1. The order in which candidates will be interviewed shall be drawn by lot at a meeting of the Regional Committee.
2. The interviews shall be limited to 40 minutes, equally divided between:
 - i. an oral presentation of the candidate's vision of the future priorities for the Region with an analysis of current problems facing it and suggestions as to how those should be addressed; and
 - ii. a question-and-answer session.
3. The Secretariat will time the presentation through a traffic light system. The light will remain green for 17 minutes, then turn to amber to indicate three minutes remaining, and then turn to red after the allotted 20 minutes have expired, at which point the Chair will request the candidate to terminate her or his statement.
4. Before the beginning of the oral presentation, the Secretariat will distribute to each member of the Committee a paper on which the member may write one question for the candidate. The paper should also identify the member posing the question. Any official language of the Regional Committee may be used to write questions.
5. At the end of the oral presentation, the Secretariat will collect the papers into a box and hand them to the Chair. The Chair will draw a question at random and read it to the candidate, disclosing also which member is asking the question. If the question does not indicate the member posing the question, the question will not be read out. The 20 minutes allotted for this part of the interview process will start running when the Chair reads the first question. It is proposed that the candidate have a maximum of 3 minutes to respond to each question.
6. This part of the process will be timed by two sets of traffic lights. One set of traffic lights will time the 20 minutes; the light will turn from green to amber after 17 minutes and will turn red after the 20 minutes have expired. The second set of traffic lights will measure the time allotted for each question; the light will turn to amber after 2 minutes and then to red after 3 minutes, at which point the Chair will request the candidate to terminate his or her response to each question.
7. The same process will be repeated until the 20 minutes have expired. Candidates may finish answering the question being considered when the 20 minutes have expired. If there are insufficient questions to fill 20 minutes, the candidate will be invited to make an additional statement if he or she wishes, provided that the 20 minutes allotted for this part of the interview stage should not be exceeded.