

REGIONAL COMMITTEE

WP/RC6/17
28 July 1955

Sixth Session
Singapore
13-19 September 1955

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Agenda item 17

REVISION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

At the fifth session of the Regional Committee a resolution was adopted requesting the Regional Director to take the necessary steps to prepare a revised draft of the rules of procedure based on proposals received from Member States.¹

In accordance with the resolution Member States were invited to submit proposals and following consideration of the amendments suggested, draft rules of procedure were established by the Regional Office and submitted to Headquarters for comment on their legal aspects. Advice was, however, received from Headquarters that in view of the fact that the Eighth World Health Assembly was to consider the revision of its own rules of procedure it might be wiser to postpone the preparation of a final draft of the regional rules of procedure until the decision of the Health Assembly in regard to its own rules was known.

Following the acceptance by the Assembly of new rules of procedure, draft model rules of procedure for regional committees were drawn up by Headquarters. These draft rules follow as closely as possible the wording of the rules of procedure of the Health Assembly as modified by the Eighth World Health Assembly, and a copy is attached for consideration of the Regional Committee.

The attention of the Committee is drawn, however, to the following point. Certain suggestions received from Member States have not been covered in these draft model rules. For information of the Committee these have been inserted against the pertinent rule under "remarks" and it is suggested that the Committee consider such proposals and decide whether they wish to have them inserted in the new draft rules.

It is further suggested that the Committee may wish to appoint a sub-committee to consider the draft rules in detail and report back to the Main Committee on its recommendations.

In view of the fact that the order of the draft model rules no longer follows that of the former rules of procedure of the Regional Committee no attempt has been made to compare the two drafts. A copy of the former rules of procedure is, however, attached for information of the Committee.

¹ WP/RC5.R14

DRAFT RULES OF PROCEDURE

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I MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

REMARKS

Rule 1

The Regional Committee (hereinafter referred to as the "Committee") shall consist of representatives, (hereinafter referred to as the "representatives") one each from the States Members and Associate Members (hereinafter referred to as "Members") forming the Western Pacific Region (hereinafter referred to as the "Region") of the World Health Organization (hereinafter referred to as the "Organization"). The representatives may be accompanied by alternates and advisers.

New rule clarifies the confusion in regard to: "Members" meaning "Member States" and "members" meaning "representatives".

Rule 2

Subject to the terms of any existing agreements, the Committee may arrange for consultation with the respective regional organizations of the United Nations and with those of other specialized agencies and with other regional international organizations having interests in common with the Organization and for their participation, without vote, in its discussion and in those of committees or sub-committees convened or established under its authority.

This is a new rule covering a situation which already exists; participation by other specialized agencies and international organizations.

II CREDENTIALS

Rule 3

The Members shall communicate to the Regional Director (hereinafter referred to as the "Director") at least fifteen days before the date fixed for the opening of the session of the Committee, the names of their representatives, including all alternates, advisers and secretaries. Similarly, the organizations referred to in Rule 2 invited to be represented at the session, shall communicate the names of the persons by

/whom

Rule 3 (cont'd.)

whom they shall be represented.

The credentials of representatives shall be delivered to the Director, if possible not less than one day before the opening of the session of the Committee.

A Member has suggested the establishment of a Committee on Credentials, the proposed text of which is as follows: "A Committee on Credentials consisting of three representatives of as many Members shall be appointed at the beginning of each session on the proposal of the Chairman of the Committee (hereinafter referred to as the "Chairman"). This Committee shall elect its own officers. It shall examine the credentials of representatives of Members and report to the Committee thereon without delay. Any representative to whose admission a Member has made objection shall be seated provisionally with the same rights as other representatives until the Committee on Credentials has reported and the Committee has given its decision."

The Committee is invited to consider whether the establishment of such a committee is necessary.

III SESSIONSRule 4

The Committee shall hold at least one session a year. It shall determine at each session the time and place of its next session. Notices convening the Committee shall be sent by the Director at least eight weeks before the commencement of the session to the Members, to the Director-General of the Organization (hereinafter referred to as the "Director-General"), and to the organizations referred to in Rule 2 invited to be represented at the session.

The suggestion has been made that in order to differentiate between (a) the annual session of the Committee and (b) a session convened at the request of Members, (a) should be called "regular session" and (b) "special session". This would also affect rule 5.

The Committee is asked to comment on this point.

REMARKS (cont'd.)

Notices convening the Committee were originally sent out six weeks in advance of the session. This has been increased to eight weeks at the request of Members.

Rule 5

The Director, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, shall also convene the Committee at the joint request of any (number)* Members, addressed to him in writing and stating the reason for the request. In this case, the Committee shall be convened within fifty days following receipt of the request and the session shall be held at Regional Headquarters unless the Director, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, determines otherwise. The agenda of such a session shall be limited to the questions having necessitated that session.

*Number to be inserted: headquarters draft suggests "at least one third." Proposals received from Member States: six.

Time limit within which the Committee shall be convened was originally set at thirty days. This has been increased to fifty days at the request of Members.

Rule 6

The meetings of the Committee shall be held in public, unless the Committee decides otherwise.

IV AGENDARule 7

The provisional agenda of each session shall be drawn up by the Director in consultation with the Chairman. It shall be despatched together with the notice of convocation to be sent in accordance with Rule 4 or Rule 5, as the case may be.

Rule 8

Except in the case of sessions convened under Rule 5, the provisional agenda of each session shall include, inter alia:

(a) the annual report of the Director on the work in the Region;

Addition suggested by Members.

/(b) all items...

Rule 8 (cont'd.)

REMARKS

- (b) all items, the inclusion of which has been prescribed by the World Health Assembly (hereinafter referred to as the "Health Assembly");
- (c) all items, the inclusion of which has been prescribed by the Executive Board of the Organization;
- (d) any item proposed by the Director-General;
- (e) all items, the inclusion of which has been prescribed by the Committee at a previous session; Addition suggested by Members.
- (f) all items pertaining to the budget for the next financial year but one and to amendments of the budget for the next financial year; Addition suggested by Members.
- (g) any item proposed by Members. Addition suggested by Members.

Rule 9

Subject to the provisions of Rule 5, the Director may, in consultation with the Chairman, include any question suitable for the agenda which may arise between the despatch of the provisional agenda and the opening day of the session in a supplementary agenda which the Committee shall examine together with the provisional agenda.

V OFFICERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Rule 10

The Committee shall elect its officers, a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, one Rapporteur in English and one Rapporteur in French, from among the representatives each year at its first session held during that year. The officers shall hold office until their successors are elected. The Chairman shall not become eligible for re-election until one (two)* year(s) have elapsed since he ceased to hold office.

Addition of Rapporteurs suggested by Members.

*The length of time depends on the number of Members in the Region.

REMARKS

Rule 11

In addition to exercising such powers as are conferred upon him elsewhere by these Rules, the Chairman shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting of the Committee, shall direct the discussions, accord the right to speak, put questions, announce decisions and assure the application of these Rules. The Chairman shall accord to speakers the right to speak in the order of their requests. He may call to order any speaker whose remarks are irrelevant to the subject under discussion.

Rule 12

If the Chairman is absent from a meeting or any part thereof, he shall designate the Vice-Chairman to preside. The same procedure shall be followed when the Chairman is unable to attend a session of the Committee.

If the Chairman is unable to make this designation, the Vice-Chairman shall preside during the session or meeting.

Rule 13

If the Chairman for any reason is unable to complete his term of office, the Committee shall elect a new Chairman for the remaining period of his term.

Rule 14

If the Chairman or the Vice-Chairman acting as Chairman, is the only representative of a Member he shall have the right to vote.

The rule suggested by Headquarters reads as follows: "The Chairman or the Vice-Chairman acting as Chairman, shall not vote but he may, if necessary, appoint another representative or alternate representative from his delegation to act as representative of his Government."

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REMARKS

It has, however, been suggested by a Member that when there is only one representative of a country attending a meeting, the rule should be amended to meet this situation.

The Committee is asked to comment on this point.

VI SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE COMMITTEE

Rule 15

The Committee may establish such sub-committees as it may deem necessary for the study of, and report on, any item on its agenda.

The Committee shall review from time to time, and in any case once a year, the need to maintain any sub-committee established under its authority.

VII SECRETARIAT

Rule 16

The Director shall act as the Secretary of the Committee and of any sub-division thereof. He may delegate these functions.

Rule 17

The Director shall report to the Committee on the technical, administrative and financial implications, if any, of all agenda items submitted to the Committee.

Rule 18

The Director, or a member of the Secretariat designated by him, may at any time make either oral or written statements concerning any question under consideration.

/Rule 19

REMARKS

Rule 19

The Secretariat shall prepare minutes of the meetings. These minutes shall be prepared in both working languages and shall be distributed to the representatives as soon as possible after the close of the meetings to which they relate. Representatives shall inform the Secretariat in writing of any corrections they wish to have made, within such period of time as shall be indicated by the Director, having regard to the circumstances.

Rule 20

All resolutions, recommendations, and other important decisions of the Committee shall be communicated by the Director to the representatives, to all Members of the Region and to the Director-General.

VIII LANGUAGES

Rule 21

English and French shall be the working languages of the Committee.

Rule 22

Speeches made in either of the working languages shall be interpreted into the other working language.

Rule 23

Any representative may speak in a language other than the working languages. In this case he shall himself provide for interpretation into one of the working languages. Interpretation into the other working language by an interpreter of the Secretariat may be based on the interpretation given in the first working language.

REMARKS

Rule 24

All resolutions, recommendations and other important decisions of the Committee shall be drawn up in both working languages.

IX CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Rule 25

A majority of the Members shall constitute a quorum.

Rule 26

Any representative may at any time request his alternate designated in accordance with Rule 3 to speak and vote on his behalf on any question. Moreover, upon the request of the representative or his alternate, the Chairman may allow an adviser to speak on any particular point but the latter shall not have the right to vote.

Rule 27

The Committee may limit the time allowed to each speaker.

Rule 28

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may rise to a point of order and the point of order shall be immediately decided by the Chairman. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the Chairman in which case the appeal shall immediately be put to the vote. A representative rising to a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion but on the point of order only.

Rule 29

REMARKS

Rule 29

During the course of a debate the Chairman may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Committee, declare the list closed. He may, however, accord the right of reply to any representative if in his opinion a speech delivered after he has declared the list closed makes it desirable.

Rule 30

During the discussion on any matter, a representative may move the suspension or adjournment of the meeting. Such motions shall not be debated but shall be immediately put to a vote.

For the purpose of these Rules "suspension of the meeting" means the temporary postponement of the business of the meeting and "adjournment of the meeting", the termination of all business until another meeting is called.

Rule 31

During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, one speaker may speak in favour of, and one against, the motion, after which the motion to adjourn the debate shall be immediately put to the vote.

Rule 32*

A representative may at any time move the closure of the debate on the item under discussion whether or not any other representative has

/signified ...

* Resolution WHA8.27 adopted by the Eighth World Health Assembly interprets the term "closure of the debate" to mean "the termination of the general debate on the item under discussion. If one or more proposals, together with any amendments, have been moved before the said closure, the discussions may only continue as regards the texts already proposed, the Health Assembly or any of its sub-divisions thereafter voting on the one or more proposals pending."

Rule 32 (cont'd.)

signified his wish to speak. If a request is made for permission to speak against closure, it may be accorded to not more than two representatives, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. If the Committee decides in favour of closure the Chairman shall declare the debate closed.

Rule 33

The following motions shall have precedence in the following order over all other proposals or motions before the meeting, except a point of order:

- a) to suspend the meeting;
- b) to adjourn the meeting;
- c) to adjourn the debate on the item under discussion; and
- d) for the closure of the debate on the item under discussion.

Rule 34

A representative may move that parts of a proposal or of an amendment shall be voted on separately. If objection is made to the request for division, the motion for division shall be voted upon. Permission to speak on the motion for division shall be given only to two speakers in favour and two speakers against. If the motion for division is carried, those parts of the proposal or of the amendment which are subsequently approved shall be put to the vote as a whole. If all operative parts of the proposal or the amendment have been rejected, the proposal or the amendment shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

/Rule 35

REMARKSRule 35

When an amendment to a proposal is moved, the amendment shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments to a proposal are moved, the Committee shall first vote on the amendment deemed by the Chairman to be furthest removed in substance from the original proposal and then on the amendment next removed therefrom, and so on, until all the amendments have been put to the vote. If one or more amendments are adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted upon.

A motion is considered an amendment to a proposal, if it merely adds to, deletes from, or revises part of that proposal. A motion which constitutes a substitution for a proposal shall be considered as a proposal.

Rule 36

If two or more proposals are moved, the Committee shall first vote on the proposal deemed by the Chairman to be furthest removed in substance from the proposal first presented and then on the proposal next removed therefrom, and so on, until all the proposals have been put to the vote, unless the result of a vote on a proposal makes unnecessary any other voting on the proposal or proposals still outstanding.

Rule 37

A motion may be withdrawn by its proposer at any time before voting on it has commenced, provided that the motion has not been amended, or, if amended, that the proposer of the amendment agrees to the withdrawal. A motion thus withdrawn may be re-introduced by any representative.

REMARKSRule 38

When a proposal has been adopted or rejected it may not be reconsidered at the same session of the Committee, unless the Committee, by a two-thirds majority of the representatives present and voting, so decides. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider shall be accorded only to two speakers opposing the motion, after which it shall be immediately put to the vote.

Rule 39

The Chairman may at any time require proposal, motion, resolution, or amendment to be seconded.

X VOTINGRule 40

Each representative entitled to vote shall have one vote. For the purpose of these Rules, the phrase "representatives present and voting" means representatives casting an affirmative or negative vote. Representatives abstaining from voting are considered as not voting. In a secret ballot all invalid votes shall be so reported to the Committee and shall be counted as abstentions.

Rule 41

Except as otherwise provided by the Constitution of the Organization or decided by the Health Assembly, the decisions of the Committee shall be made by a majority of the representatives present and voting.

Rule 42

If the votes are equally divided on a matter other than an election, the proposal shall be regarded as not adopted.

/Rule 43

REMARKS

Rule 43

The Committee shall normally vote by show of hands, except that any representative may request a roll-call which shall then be taken in the English alphabetical order of the names of the Members.

Rule 44

The vote of each representative participating in any roll-call shall be inserted in the records.

Rule 45

Elections shall normally be held by secret ballot. However, except as concerns the nomination of the Director, if the number of candidates for elective office does not exceed the number of offices to be filled no ballot shall be required and such candidate shall be declared elected. Where ballots required two tellers appointed by the Chairman from among the representatives shall assist in the counting of votes. The nomination of the Director shall be decided by secret ballot in accordance with Rule 49.

Rule 46*

In addition to the cases provided for elsewhere by these Rules, the Committee may vote on any matter by secret ballot if it has previously so decided by a majority of the representatives present and voting, provided that no secret ballot may be taken on budgetary questions.

* Resolution WHA8.27 adopted by the Eighth World Health Assembly gives the following interpretation as concerns the vote by secret ballot: "A decision under this Rule by the Health Assembly whether or not to vote by secret ballot, may be taken by a show of hands; if the Assembly has decided to vote on a particular question by secret ballot, no other mode of voting (show of hands or roll-call) may be requested or decided on".

Rule 47

Subject to the provisions of Rule 48, when only one elective place is to be filled and no candidate obtains in the first ballot the majority required, a second ballot shall be taken which shall be restricted to the two candidates obtaining the largest number of votes; if in the second ballot the votes are equally divided, the Chairman shall decide between the candidates by drawing lots.

Rule 48

When two or more elective places are to be filled at one time under the same conditions, 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, there shall be as many additional ballots as are necessary to fill the remaining places, the ballots being restricted to the candidates obtaining the greatest number of votes in the previous ballot to a number not more than twice the places remaining to be filled.

Rule 49

For the nomination of the Director, the Committee shall establish a list of candidates whose names shall be selected by a secret ballot and presented in alphabetical order. The Committee shall then elect its candidate by secret ballot.

For this purpose each representative entitled to vote shall write on his 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 candidates is reduced to two, there shall be as many ballots as are necessary in order to secure a majority for either candidate. In the event of a tie between the remaining candidates after three such ballots, the whole procedure

REMARKS

Rule 49 (cont'd.)

established by this Rule shall be recommenced.

The name of the person so nominated shall be submitted to the Executive Board.

SUSPENSION AND AMENDMENT OF RULES OF PROCEDURE

Rule 50

Subject to the provisions of the Constitution of the Organization any of these Rules may be suspended by the Committee provided that at least forty-eight hours' notice of the proposal for such suspension has been given to the Chairman and communicated by him to the representatives twenty-four hours before the meeting at which the proposal is to be submitted. If, however, on the advice of the Chairman the Committee is unanimously in favour of such a proposal, it may adopt it immediately and without notice.

Rule 51

Amendments of, or additions to, these Rules may be adopted by the Committee, provided that the Committee has received and considered a report thereon by an appropriate sub-committee.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Rule 52

The Committee may at its discretion apply such Rules of Procedure of the Health Assembly or of the Executive Board of the Organization as it may deem appropriate to particular circumstances.