

WHITE PAPER

Supplementary agenda item entitled

“Inviting Taiwan to participate in the World Health Assembly as an observer”

Background

As in previous years, a supplementary item entitled “Inviting Taiwan to participate in the World Health Assembly as an observer” has been proposed for the agenda of the 72nd WHA.

The General Committee (GC) will consider this proposal on Monday 20 May, immediately after conclusion of the High-level Segment, to make a recommendation to the Plenary on whether or not to include the item on the WHA agenda.

In the afternoon, Plenary will consider the GC’s recommendation under item 1.4 (“Adoption of the agenda and allocation of items to the main committees”).

To ensure a predictable and orderly handling of this matter, and following successful informal consultations, the WHA President will propose to follow a process known as the “two plus two arrangement” both in the GC and in the Plenary.

The proposal and acceptance of this process is entirely consistent with the rules of procedure. In particular, Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure of the WHA, provides the President the authority, inter alia, to “propose limitations of speaking time” and to “direct the discussions”. And the Assembly has the authority, as master of its process within the rules of procedure, to agree on such a proposal.

This process proved to work well in the past on many occasions.

Expected procedure in the General Committee

In the GC, the process would be structured as follows:

- The President would give the floor for 3 minutes to a delegation pre-selected to speak in support of the inclusion of the proposed supplementary item. Then, the President will give the floor to a delegation preselected to speak against such inclusion, also for 3 minutes. The same process will then be repeated with two further delegations (for a total of 4 interventions).
- Following these four interventions, the GC, guided by the President, would adopt a recommendation to Plenary not to include the proposed supplementary item on the agenda. It will do so without voting.

Expected procedure in the Plenary

In the Plenary, the process would be structured as follows:

- The President would give the floor for 3 minutes to a delegation pre-selected to speak in support of the GC’s recommendation. Then, the President would give the floor to a delegation pre-selected to speak against such recommendation, also for 3 minutes. The same process will then be repeated with 2 further delegations (for a total of 4 interventions).
- Following these four interventions, the Plenary, guided by the President, would proceed to accept the GC’s recommendation not to include the proposed supplementary item. It would do so without voting. Accordingly, the WHA agenda would be adopted without the proposed supplementary item.

Procedural considerations

The process as outlined has ensured that the viewpoints on this matter are well expressed and recorded in the verbatim records of the Plenary; and its outcome has worked to well reflect the weight of views among Member States on this matter.

Further, those closest to this matter have fully agreed to this arrangement, including its outcome, for this WHA.

Finally, the will of the WHA in support of this arrangement reflects its collective interest in ensuring an orderly and efficient discussion process and outcome.

It is understood that, in accordance with the arrangement described above, there would be no further comments or explanations of position on this matter after the adoption of the agenda.

The support of all Member States for the predictable handling of this matter, through this arrangement, is appreciated.