

# Procedures and Operating Policies of the World Medical Association

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter 3, Section 3.5.4, added new f)

<sup>2</sup> Chapter 1, Section 1.1.2, added new last two sentences

<sup>3</sup> Chapter 3, Section 3.5.2.2, added new last sentence

<sup>4</sup> Chapter 4, Section 4.5.3 and 4.6.1

<sup>5</sup> Chapter 3, Section 3.7, added new 3.7.2 b)-f), 3.7.3.1, 3.7.3.2 b)-c) and 3.7.3.4 b)-f)

## **Introduction**

These Procedures and Operating Policies are established under the authority of, and subject to, the Articles and Bylaws of the World Medical Association. In the event of any conflict among any provisions of the Procedures and Operating Policies and any provision of the Articles and Bylaws, the Articles and Bylaws shall prevail.

## **Chapter 1: Election and Voting Procedures for All Bodies of the WMA**

The rules governing eligibility to stand for election to the various WMA offices and eligibility to vote on various matters within the WMA can be found in the WMA Bylaws. This Chapter addresses voting procedures only.

### **1.1 Election Procedures for all Officers**

**1.1.1** All elections of officers shall be decided by secret ballot unless there is only one candidate nominated, in which case election may be by acclamation. If there are more than two candidates for any office, no candidate shall be declared elected unless he or she has received a majority of the votes cast. If no candidate has received a majority of the votes cast, then the name of the candidate receiving the smallest number of votes shall be dropped and the remaining candidates shall be voted on again until one receives a majority.

**1.1.2** The Secretary General shall supervise the counting of ballots in all elections conducted in the General Assembly and the Council and its Committees. In the case of election of the President during the General Assembly, the Secretary General will also be assisted by the members of the Credentials Committee who shall serve as tellers. In cases of officers elected by the Council, and Committee Chairs elected by Committees, candidates must, to the degree possible, be present at the time of the election, except due to circumstances deemed acceptable by the electing body. Candidates will have an opportunity to speak to their candidacy.

### **1.2 Voting Procedures for Policy and other Business Matters**

Voting on policy and other business matters in the General Assembly, Council, and Committees shall normally be conducted by raising voting cards provided to eligible voters by the Secretary General, with the following exceptions:

- a) Any member may request a roll call, which shall be conducted by the Secretary General and recorded in the record.
- b) Any member may make a motion to vote by secret ballot, which shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of those present and voting, as prescribed in the Bylaws.
- c) Any member may suggest adoption of a pending matter by consensus unless such matter requires an affirmative vote. If there is no objection thereto, the matter shall be deemed to be accepted. If any delegate objects to such adoption by consensus, the pending matter shall be put to a vote.
- d) The General Assembly may decide to use an electronic system of voting if an appropriate system is available.

### **1.3 Secret Ballot**

**1.3.1** The procedures for voting by secret ballot shall be decided by the Secretary General in consultation with the WMA Legal Advisor. Secret ballot voting may be conducted using paper ballots or an electronic system, if available. Any process for voting by secret ballot must:

- a) ensure that all votes can be cast anonymously
- b) provide the possibility of multiple rounds of voting
- c) include a reliable and verifiable process for determining an accurate count of votes

**1.3.2** The Secretary General will supervise the counting of ballots, assisted by the WMA Legal Advisor, for all voting on policy and other business matters conducted by secret ballot.

## **Chapter 2. Procedures related to the work of the WMA General Assembly**

The following procedures for conduct of business of the General Assembly are established pursuant to Chapter 4, Section 9 of the WMA Bylaws.

### **2.1 Agenda**

#### **2.1.1 Preparation**

- a) The agenda for the Assembly shall be prepared by the Council, which shall have power to decide whether or not a proposal submitted by a Constituent Member falls within the objectives of the Association.
- b) The agenda shall include those matters prescribed as “Responsibilities of the General Assembly” in Chapter IV, Section 2 of the WMA Bylaws.
- c) All matters for consideration by the General Assembly shall be subject to any procedures and processes provided in the Bylaws or in these Procedures and Operating Policies.

#### **2.1.2 Time Limits for Submitting Agenda Items**

- a) Unless otherwise required under the Articles or Bylaws of the Association, matters to be considered by the General Assembly shall be submitted to the Secretariat at least eight weeks prior to the date of the meeting of the General Assembly at which the matter is to be considered.
- b) The Council, at its discretion, after due consideration, may waive any time limit for the submission of matters for consideration by the Assembly.

#### **2.1.3 Urgent Matters**

- a) Notwithstanding the above provisions, a Constituent Member may present an urgent matter for consideration by the Assembly. Urgent matters shall consist solely of matters of substantial importance which were unknown or unforeseen at the time the agenda was prepared and which require immediate action that cannot be taken by any other body of the WMA within the appropriate time.
- b) Notice in writing of the urgent matter shall be submitted to the Secretariat as soon as possible and, if feasible, in sufficient time for the Secretariat to translate the proposal into the other official languages of the Association and distribute the proposal to the delegates.
- c) Any proposal on an urgent matter shall be referred to the Council at its pre-Assembly meeting, or, if that meeting has already adjourned, the Council members present in the Assembly chamber, who shall determine, there and then, whether or not the matter falls within the objectives of the Association and whether or not the matter is urgent. The Council members shall consult with the Secretary General and with such advisers as they deem necessary. If a majority of the Council members present determine that the matter is urgent and falls within the objectives of the Association, the matter shall be considered by the Assembly.

- d) As stipulated in the Bylaws, the adoption of any proposal on an urgent matter shall require the affirmative vote of three-quarters of the Assembly delegates present and voting.

#### **2.1.4 Recorded Material**

The proceedings at all meetings of the General Assembly shall be recorded verbatim, and the Secretary General is authorized to use all statements made in this record in preparing the minutes of the meeting. Speakers not wishing their remarks to appear in the minutes are obliged to indicate either at the beginning or at the end of their remarks their desire for such statements to be deleted from the record. The Secretary General shall remind meeting participants at the beginning of each General Assembly that the proceedings will be recorded and that they must indicate clearly any remarks they do not wish to be included in the minutes.

The Secretary General shall not be obliged to make amendments to the summary of the meeting if such amendments:

- a) Delete material not indicated by the speaker as confidential or "off the record";
- b) Add new material not presented during the discussion in Council;
- c) Constitute only a rewording of the statement made before Council and do not change the meaning or the substance of the remarks.

The audio files of the proceedings shall be kept until the minutes have been approved by the General Assembly, after which they shall be deleted.

#### **2.1.5 Presentation in Official Languages**

Prior to consideration by the Assembly, all matters on the agenda shall be presented to delegates in the official languages of the Association.

#### **2.1.6 Scientific Session**

There shall be a Scientific Session included in the agenda of the General Assembly, the topic of which shall have been agreed upon at least one year previously by the General Assembly. The schedule and duration of the Scientific Session shall be determined by the Secretary General. The agenda of the Scientific Session shall be developed by the Secretary General in coordination with the host association for the General Assembly.

### **2.2 Order of Business of the General Assembly**

The agenda of the sessions of the General Assembly shall, in general, be developed according to the order of business described below. The order of business prescribed by the agenda may be varied at any time by the General Assembly.

#### **2.2.1 Ceremonial Session**

- a) **Call to Order.** Declaration of convening of the Assembly.

- b) **Reception and Roll Call.** Conduct official reception and roll call of delegations and international observers by the Secretary General.
- c) **Greetings.** Receive greetings from President, officials of host association, national officials of the host country, and other dignitaries, if present.
- d) **Installation of President.** Install the President of the World Medical Association. During the ceremony, the retiring President will deliver a final address and, after installation, the incoming President will deliver an inaugural address.

### 2.2.2 Scientific Session

The order of business of the Scientific Session shall be determined by the Secretary General in coordination with the host association of the General Assembly

### 2.2.3 Plenary Session

- a) **Credentials Committee.** Receive the Report of the Credentials Committee.
- b) **Minutes.** Approve the Minutes of previous General Assembly as distributed, with amendments, if any.
- c) **Committee Appointment.** Appoint such committees as may be necessary or appropriate to assist in conducting the meeting of the General Assembly and whose service shall be limited to the meeting of the General Assembly.
- d) **Election of President-Elect.** Elect a new President-Elect of the World Medical Association, pursuant to Chapter VI, Section 1 of the WMA Bylaws.
- e) **Report of the Council.** Consider the Report of the Council to the General Assembly, including the Financial Report, and motions for the adoption thereof in whole or in part.
- f) **Special Reports.** Consider special reports, if any, and any motions for the adoption thereof in whole or in part.
- g) **Motions by Constituent Members.** Consider any other motions placed upon the agenda of the meeting by Constituent Members.
- h) **Venue of Next General Assembly.** Confirm the venue of the next General Assembly.
- i) **Any other Business.** Consider any other business properly raised by Constituent Members.
- j) **Reference to Council.** Refer to the Council all matters approved or adopted by the Assembly which require that some action be taken.
- k) **Adjournment.** Declaration of the adjournment of the General Assembly.

### 2.3 Presentation of Reports

All reports presented to the General Assembly shall be in writing and no report which has been distributed in advance to the Assembly shall be read in its entirety unless the General Assembly so demands. The Chair or, in his/her absence, a member of the body submitting such a report, shall merely comment on it and answer questions put by members of the General Assembly. In concluding the report, the Chair shall move:

- a) That each recommendation, if any, be adopted by separate vote;
- b) That the rest of the report be approved;
- c) That the report be adopted as a whole, subject to any amendments which may have been made.

## **Chapter 3. Procedures related to the work of the WMA Council**

The Council shall adopt, and thereafter abide by, such rules of procedure for the conduct of its business, and the business of the Standing Committees, as it deems advisable, provided that such rules are not in conflict with any provision of the Articles and Bylaws. Such procedures, unless extraordinary and temporary in nature, shall be described in these Procedures and Operating Policies of the World Medical Association.

### **3.1 Agenda**

#### **3.1.1 Agenda Preparation**

The agenda of the Council shall be prepared by the Secretary General, in consultation with the Chair of Council, and shall include any items of business remaining from the previous Council session, any items referred to the Council by the General Assembly, and any new items of business properly submitted by Constituent Members and Council Members.

#### **3.1.2 Timelines for Submitting Agenda Items**

The documents relating to each item on the agenda must be submitted to the Secretary General at least eight weeks prior to the opening of the meeting at which the items are to be considered. The Secretary General shall distribute the agenda, with all necessary supporting documents, to each Council member by e-mail at least four weeks in advance of the Council meeting.

#### **3.1.3 Urgent Matters**

Consideration of agenda items and documentation distributed to Council members less than four weeks prior to a Council meeting can proceed if the Council votes to consider the matter as an urgent matter. If not accepted for immediate discussion, it may be deferred to a later meeting of the Council.

### **3.2 Reports**

#### **3.2.1 Recorded Material**

The proceedings at all meetings of Council, with the exception of the Executive Sessions, shall be recorded verbatim, and the Secretary General is authorized to use all statements made in this record in preparing the minutes of the meeting. Speakers not wishing their remarks to appear in the minutes are obliged to indicate either at the beginning or at the end of their remarks their desire for such statements to be deleted from the record. The Secretary General shall remind meeting participants at the beginning of each Council Session that the proceedings will be recorded and that they must indicate clearly any remarks they do not wish to be included in the minutes.

The Secretary General shall not be obliged to make amendments to the summary of the meeting if such amendments:

- a) Delete material not indicated by the speaker as confidential or "off the record";
- b) Add new material not presented during the discussion in Council;



- c) Constitute only a rewording of the statement made before Council and do not change the meaning or the substance of the remarks.

The audio files of the proceedings shall be kept until the minutes have been approved by the Council, after which they shall be deleted.

### **3.2.2 Consent Calendar**

The Council may, at its discretion, use a consent calendar to consider reports from the Standing Committees, workgroups, consultants, or other reports properly submitted for its consideration. Likewise, Standing Committees may use a consent calendar to consider reports on its agenda.

When using a consent calendar, the entire report is presented and the Chair shall allow any voting member to extract an item or items for individual consideration. Requests for extraction do not require a vote and all requests for extractions must be honored. Items do not need to be identified in any particular order. After the extractions have been recorded by the Chair, members shall vote on approval of the remainder of the report. Following the approval of the remainder of the report, extracted items will be considered in the order in which they appear in the report, unless the Council or Committee decides to address them in a different order. Extracted items are considered in the traditional manner, according to established parliamentary procedure.

### **3.3 Documents Approved for Transmittal to the General Assembly**

The Council shall transmit to the General Assembly all reports, proposed Declarations, Statements, or Resolutions, applications for WMA membership, financial documentation, proposed amendments to the Articles and Bylaws, and other items that the Council has approved and that require approval or adoption by the General Assembly according to the WMA Bylaws. All items being transmitted shall be included in the Council's annual Report to the General Assembly.

Documents for transmittal to the Assembly shall be agreed upon in their final form and content prior to the adjournment of the Council meeting at which the decision is made to forward them to the General Assembly. Further additions to these documents and additional documentation shall not be received for transmittal to the General Assembly unless of a critical or urgent nature, or resulting from a development occurring in the interim between Council meetings.

### **3.4 Closed Sessions and Executive Sessions**

#### **3.4.1 Closed Sessions**

Council Sessions shall be open to official representatives of all Constituent Members of the Association and to such other observers as the Council members and the Secretary General may invite or permit to attend. However, the Council may vote to hold all or any portion of a Council, including Committee meetings, as a "Closed Session." Attendance at a "Closed Session" shall be limited to Council Members; such staff, if any, as the Council may authorize; and such other persons as the Council may wish to appear before it.

### **3.4.2 Executive Sessions**

The Council may vote to hold all or any portion of a Council meeting, including Committee meetings, as an "Executive Session." Attendance at an "Executive Session" shall be limited to Council Members and the Secretary General, together with such translation staff as the Council may require. If the Council desires the decisions taken at the "Executive Session" to be recorded in the minutes, the Council shall so instruct the Secretary General. Unless such action is taken and the decisions of the Council are so recorded in the minutes, they shall not be binding upon the work or conduct of the World Medical Association, Inc. or any of its officers, Council Members, agents or employees.

### **3.5 Standing Committees of the Council**

The Council shall adopt such rules of procedure for the conduct of the business of the Standing Committees as it deems advisable, provided such rules are not in conflict with any provision of the Articles and Bylaws. The WMA Bylaws provide that the Standing Committees shall be:

1. Finance and Planning
2. Socio-Medical Affairs
3. Medical Ethics

#### **3.5.1 Standing Committee Membership**

##### **3.5.1.1 Appointment**

- a) The members of the Standing Committees shall be appointed by the members of the Council from among its membership at the first meeting of the Council following the biennial election of members of the Council.
- b) Each member of the Council must be prepared to serve on at least one and not more than two Standing Committees.
- c) The Secretary General shall obtain from each member of Council an indication of which Committee or Committees on which the member would be prepared to serve, including any specific qualifications that may be relevant to such service. He or she shall then recommend to the Council for its approval a roster of members for each Committee. The Council shall have discretion as to the number of members it appoints to each Standing Committee.

##### **3.5.1.2 Term of Service**

Individuals shall serve on the Committees for a period of two years provided they remain members of the Council.

### **3.5.2 Standing Committee Chairs**

#### **3.5.2.1 Election**

A Chair shall be elected by the members of each Committee from among the Committee membership. The election shall take place at the first meeting of the Committee following the biennial election of members of the Council.

#### **3.5.2.2 Term and Conditions of Service**

The Chair shall serve for a term of two years, the term expiring immediately before the start of the meeting of Council following the next biennial election of members of the Council. The Chair shall be eligible for re-election provided he/she remains a member of the Council. An individual may serve a maximum of six years in the position of Chair of each Committee. If an individual completes his/her maximum term as Chair of a Committee, he/she shall be eligible for election as Chair of another Committee.

The Chair shall not hold any other elected position within the WMA during his/her term as Chair.

Where an individual begins serving as Chair midterm, such partial term shall not be counted towards the maximum six years that s/he may serve as Chair.

#### **3.5.2.3 Vacancy**

In the event of a vacancy in the position, at the next meeting of the Committee the members shall elect a Chair to serve the unexpired portion of the term remaining.

### **3.5.3 Meetings of the Standing Committees**

The Standing Committees shall meet at least twice a year at the places and times agreed by the Council, but the Council may authorize additional meetings at places and times to be determined by the Standing Committees themselves.

### **3.5.4 Finance and Planning Committee**

It shall be the duty of the Finance and Planning Committee to assist the Council and the Treasurer to fulfill their responsibilities in respect of the financial affairs of the Association, the planning of meetings of the Council and of the General Assembly (including the Scientific Sessions) and the general administration of the organization. In particular the Committee shall advise the Council and/or the Treasurer on:

- a) appropriate places and times for future meetings of the Committees, the Council and the Assembly;
- b) the appropriate level of the annual subscription to be levied on the constituent and associate members of the Association;
- c) the preparation of a Balance Sheet and Financial Statement for the past year and an estimate of the probable income and expenditure of the Association for the coming year;

- d) the oversight of the purchase, sale or maintenance of any real estate property of the Association;
- e) resolutions, properly submitted by constituent members, which do not rightly fall within the scope of the Medical Ethics or Socio-Medical Affairs Committees;
- f) the development of the WMA Strategic Plan;
- g) changes to the Articles and Bylaws, the Procedures and Operating Policies of the WMA, or any other rules for the governance of the Association or the conduct of its business; and,
- h) any other matter properly referred to it by the Council or the Treasurer.

### **3.5.5 Medical Ethics Committee**

It shall be the duty of the Medical Ethics Committee to consider the ethical implications of any matter concerning the relationship between the medical profession, the other health care professions, the public and the national governments or authorities, and to advise the Council on such matters. In particular the Committee shall advise the Council on:

- a) any draft of proposed Declarations, Statements or Resolutions of the Association which are primarily ethical in nature;
- b) any resolutions or motions properly submitted by constituent members or others and which are primarily ethical in nature; and
- c) any other matter properly referred to it by the Council.

### **3.5.6 Socio-Medical Affairs Committee**

It shall be the duty of the Socio-Medical Affairs Committee to consider, and to advise the Council on, any matters with a medical or socio-medical content and which are not primarily ethical in nature or concerned with the financial, organizational and administrative functions of the Association. In particular the Committee shall advise the Council on:

- a) any drafts of proposed Declarations, Statements or Resolutions of the Association which fall within its general terms of reference;
- b) any resolutions or motions properly submitted by constituent members or others which fall within its general terms of reference;
- c) any matters relating to women's health issues; and,
- d) any other matter properly referred to it by the Council.

### **3.6 Other Committees**

The Council shall establish such other Committees as it deems necessary or as requested by the Assembly. Unless otherwise determined, the Council shall define the functions and composition of each Committee. All members of Council shall serve on Committees upon

appointment by the Chair in consultation with the Secretary General. A Committee established for a specific purpose shall cease to exist when the purpose for which it was established has been accomplished.

### **3.7 Workgroups**

#### **3.7.1 Appointment**

Workgroups shall be appointed by the Chair of Council, usually upon the recommendation of the Council or Standing Committees. Each workgroup will have a clearly formulated mandate and shall cease to exist when the purpose for which it was established has been accomplished or when Council so determines.

#### **3.7.2 Members**

- a) The Chair of Council will appoint a maximum of six individuals or constituent members to serve on a workgroup, including a workgroup Chair.
- b) The Chair of Council can appoint the Associate Members, including the Junior Doctors Network, to serve on a workgroup within the limit of six members.
- c) The Chair of Council can appoint additional individuals or members as observer within the workgroup. Furthermore, the Chair of the workgroup may also admit additional individuals or members to participate in workgroup meetings as observers in cases where this would contribute valuable input to the ongoing work of a workgroup.
- d) The composition of workgroups should reflect, wherever possible, a balance in the representation of previously expressed viewpoints on the issue (if applicable) as well as a balance in the representation of WMA geographical regions.
- e) Each constituent member appointed will duly inform the secretariat of the name of its official representative within the workgroup and an alternate if needed.
- f) If the Associate Members are appointed, the Chair of Associate Members will duly inform the secretariat of the name of its official representative within the workgroup and an alternate if needed.

#### **3.7.3 Procedures**

##### **3.7.3.1 Role of Workgroup members (official representative)**

- a) When accepting to serve in a workgroup, members commit to contribute to its work and be responsive to workgroup communications. Members will be notified the present Procedures related to workgroup and will express their explicit consent to its terms.
- b) Each constituent member or the Associate Members have one representative in the workgroup, acting as the main contact with the other workgroup members and the secretariat.
- c) All members of the workgroup are treated on an equal basis and express opinion through its official representative or her/his alternate in case of absence.
- d) Where relevant, the official representative coordinates the internal consultation within its network (affiliates, experts). His/her contribution to the workgroup takes into consideration the opinions emerged from the consultation.
- e) Based on the mandate of the workgroup, the Chair of the workgroup proposes a timely programme of work and leads the activities of the workgroup.

### **3.7.3.2 Support**

- a) The Chair of Council and Secretary General will provide assistance and support to each workgroup in the implementation of its mandate including, when necessary, modification of its membership or task.
- b) In case of persistent inactivity of one of the members, the Chair of Council will consult with its Constituent or Associate member leader to consider the appointment of a new representative.
- c) In the absence of a new proposed representative, the Chair of Council will revoke the workgroup member and appoint a new one in replacement if she/he deems necessary.

### **3.7.3.3 Communications**

Electronic forms of communication, especially web technology, will be used as the main form of communication.

### **3.7.3.4 Meetings**

- a) Face to face meetings will be arranged only if essential. No simultaneous interpretation will be provided during meetings, unless it is absolutely essential.
- b) Online meetings can also be arranged when needed. Online meetings can be recorded upon request of the Chair of the workgroup or one its members.
- c) By accepting the terms of the present procedures, members of the workgroup give their consent to the recording of meetings. The voice recording is shared within the workgroup for their personal use only. The secretariat takes the necessary measures to ensure that the voice recording remains available to the workgroup for a limited period of two weeks. The secretariat keeps safely a copy of the recording until the end of the workgroup mandate.
- d) Workgroup meetings (in person or online) are attended by the official representative of each member.
- e) The alternate and a staff member, can attend workgroup meetings as observers.
- f) It is the privilege of WMA officers and officials<sup>6</sup>, by virtue of their position, to attend workgroup meetings.

### **3.7.3.5 Languages**

One of the official languages will be used as the working language for work documents and meetings. Translation of documents into the other official languages will only be performed once the final recommendations of the workgroup are being prepared.

### **3.7.3.6 Financial Implications**

There will be no remuneration of workgroup members except for the reimbursement of travel expenses, where appropriate.

## **3.8 Appointment and Privileges of Official Advisors**

### **3.8.1 Appointment**

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<sup>6</sup> WMA officers: President, President-Elect, Immediate Past President, Chair and Vice-Chair of Council and Treasurer / WMA officials: Secretary General (and delegated members of the Secretariat), Legal Advisor, Financial Advisor, Press Relations Officer.

The Council may appoint biennially persons as official Advisors to individual Standing Committees after consideration of nominations from the said committees or from the individual's National Medical Association. Nominees must be members in good standing of constituent members, or Associate Members, or Officials or staff of the Association.

### **3.8.2 Privileges**

Advisors shall have the right to receive all documents circulated to members of the Standing Committee to which they are appointed, and to attend meetings of the said committee (provided that their travel and subsistence expenses for such attendance are not a charge on the World Medical Association). On the invitation of the Chair, individual Advisors may speak at the meetings of the Committees to which they are appointed.

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## **Chapter 4. Procedures for the Formulation of Declarations, Statements and Resolutions**

### **4.1 Definitions**

- 4.1.1** A Resolution expresses WMA reaction to a specific, usually urgent, situation.
- 4.1.2** A Declaration or Statement reflects WMA policy on an issue considered to be of significance, to be universally applicable and embodying principles that endure over time.
- 4.1.3** A distinction is made between a Declaration, which is broad in scope, and a Statement, which is limited in scope. The decision to designate a policy document as a Declaration shall be made by the General Assembly.

### **4.2 Criteria for a Declaration or Statement**

- 4.2.1** The following criteria shall be applied in determining whether the Association shall consider a proposed Declaration/Statement on a particular issue:
- a) the issue is an important factor in human health;
  - b) the issue is a matter of concern to physicians in all or most national medical associations; and,
  - c) the analysis and solution would benefit from the experience and/or expertise of physicians.
- 4.2.2** When an intended proposal deals with an issue already covered by a previous Declaration/Statement, the new text should be presented either as an amendment to the previous document, or presented as a revised version of the previous document with the new text included in it.
- 4.2.3** A Declaration/Statement, when adopted, should represent a general consensus among national member associations on the issue.

### **4.3 Elements:**

- 4.3.1** Normally each proposed Declaration/Statement shall contain the following elements:
- a) a preamble which succinctly describes the issue and explains why it is a matter of concern to physicians world-wide;
  - b) a position on the issue, accompanied by arguments in support of the position and rebuttals of opposing views; and,
  - c) a recommendation or recommendations for action, directed to specific agents, i.e. national medical associations, national governments, international inter-governmental agencies (e.g. the United Nations, the World Health Organization), etc.



#### **4.4 Process**

- 4.4.1** A Declaration/Statement may be initiated by or through one or more national member associations, by one or more associate members through the Associate Members Meeting, or by a Standing Committee of the Association.
- 4.4.2** Other than in the case of initiation by a Standing Committee, a proposed Declaration/Statement shall be submitted to the Secretariat in one of the three official languages of the Association and in a form which contains the elements listed above.
- 4.4.3** The Secretariat shall ensure that any proposed Declaration/Statement submitted for consideration contains the elements listed above and, if not, shall return the text to the initiator for revision. A proposed Declaration/Statement which contains the required elements shall be translated into the other official languages of the Association before submission to the appropriate committee of the Association for consideration.
- 4.4.4** Once a committee of the Association has begun consideration of a proposed Declaration/Statement, no alternative Declaration/Statement on the same topic shall be considered unless and until the original proposal has been voted down by the committee, the Council or the General Assembly.
- 4.4.5** A committee of the Association after preliminary consideration of a proposed Declaration/Statement may:
- a) Recommend that the document be referred to the national member associations for comments;
  - b) Postpone consideration of the document to a specified date, or
  - c) Not approve the document and recommend that it be not approved by the Council.
- 4.4.6** Where a proposed Declaration/Statement is referred to the national member associations for comments, the comments received will be collated by the Secretariat and/or an appointed rapporteur and a new draft document developed taking into account the original document and the comments received. A designated workgroup may serve as rapporteur. The original document and the comments received would be translated and made available at the time of discussion, but the rapporteur's draft would be the principal item under discussion.

Thereafter, the committee may:

- a) Approve the proposed Declaration/Statement without change, and recommend that it be approved by the Council
- b) Amend the document and approve it, and recommend that it be approved by the Council
- c) Refer the document back to the rapporteur or the secretariat for further revision
- d) Postpone consideration of the document to a specified date
- e) Not approve the document and recommend that it be not approved by the Council

- 4.4.7** In the case of postponement of a proposed Declaration/Statement, the committee shall provide reasons for this decision to the initiator.
- 4.4.8** Following consideration and recommendation by a committee, a proposed Declaration/Statement shall be forwarded to the Council. The Council may:
- a) Approve the proposed Declaration/Statement without change
  - b) Amend the document and approve it
  - c) Postpone consideration of the document to a specified date
  - d) Direct that the document be referred to the national member associations for comments, and/or refer the document back to the Committee for further consideration
  - e) Not approve the document
- 4.4.9** Upon approval by the Council, the proposed Declaration/Statement shall be submitted to the General Assembly with a recommendation for adoption.
- 4.4.10** In the case of non-approval of a proposed Declaration/Statement, the Council shall provide reasons for this decision to the initiator. The initiator may request that the proposed Declaration/Statement be submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration. Following receipt of such request and the consent of four members of the Council, the document shall be submitted by the Council to the General Assembly with a recommendation that it be not adopted.
- 4.5 Council Resolutions**
- 4.5.1** The Council may adopt Resolutions on matters of substantial importance that require immediate action which cannot be taken by the General Assembly within the appropriate time. A Council Resolution may:
- a) Reaffirm a previous Declaration/Statement/Resolution
  - b) Express a position or reaction, which shall be based on the intent of a previous Declaration/Statement/Resolution or on previous WMA actions that are related in subject matter
- 4.5.2** A Resolution adopted by Council shall be designated as a “Resolution of the Council of the World Medical Association”, and shall not be included in the Handbook of WMA Policy, but may be made available to the NMAs, the press, and outside organizations and individuals.
- 4.5.3** The Council shall forward the Council Resolution to the next General Assembly for adoption with a recommendation on how to proceed, considering the remaining urgency and applicability of the Council Resolution at the time of the General Assembly. The latter maybe determined at the Council Session immediately preceding the General Assembly.

## **4.6 Review of Declarations, Statements and Resolutions**

- 4.6.1** In order that WMA policy statements remain up-to-date and relevant, they should undergo periodic review. Each Declaration and Statement shall be reviewed at least every ten years and Resolutions at least every five years.
- 4.6.2** At a Council meeting each year, the WMA Secretariat shall provide the Medical Ethics Committee and the Socio-Medical Affairs Committee with a list of policy statements for review and recommendations for dealing with each one. After consideration, the Committee may recommend to Council that a policy statement:
- a) be reaffirmed with no changes or only minor ones (editorial corrections, deletion of outdated references, etc., but no changes to the substance of the policy). Approval of such revisions will be the responsibility of Council. They will be reported to the following General Assembly for information.
  - b) undergo major revision, following which the policy statement will be reviewed by the appropriate committee and Council according to paragraphs 4.4.5 – 4.4.9 (above).
  - c) be rescinded and archived. Upon approval by Council, the recommendation for rescinding will be forwarded to the General Assembly for approval.

## **Chapter 5. Finance**

### **5.1 Scope of the Annual Audit**

The WMA Bylaws stipulates that an audit of the accounts of the association shall be performed annually and that the scope of the audit shall be outlined in the Procedures and Operating Policies of the WMA.

The scope of the audit shall be based on accepted international standards on auditing and shall cover all items in the Annual Financial Statement of the WMA. The Annual Financial Statement shall comprise a balance sheet, statement of equity, income statement, and notes for the previous fiscal year, supplemented by additional schedules on the detailed accounts of membership dues.

### **5.2 Investment Policy**

#### **5.2.1 Objectives**

**5.2.1.1** The purpose of the invested (reserve) funds of the WMA is:

- a) to meet unforeseen contingencies
- b) to increase the financial ability of the Association to carry out its activities
- c) to produce income in order to lessen the need for increases in the subscription rates
- d) to provide real, inflation adjusted growth in the funds in the long-term; and,
- e) to give a degree of liquidity, and operational and financial flexibility

**5.2.1.2** The funds should be invested in a way that will ensure that they grow in real, inflation adjusted terms and maintain the Association's invested financial resources at a level to be agreed between the Treasurer and the Finance and Planning Committee. The investment goals and plan will be reviewed periodically by the Finance and Planning Committee.

**5.2.1.3** The allocation of the assets should be structured to provide the highest level of return within the risk parameters established by the Treasurer and the Finance and Planning Committee.

**5.2.1.4** The investments shall be made only in highest quality securities and secure deposits taking into consideration the aspects of:

- maintenance of the real value of the Association equity
- permanent liquidity to cover the running expenses
- high yield
- shelter against foreign currency fluctuation

#### **5.2.2 Prohibited Investments**

No investment shall be made that does not conform to Chapter VI, Section 4.D.i of the WMA Bylaws, which requires that the Treasurer obey the ethical standards of the Association when selecting the types and specifics of investments.

### **5.3 Reimbursement of Per Diem Allowances and Travel Expenses to WMA Officers and Members of Council**

The term "Officers", as defined in the Articles of the Association, indicates the President, the President-Elect, the Immediate Past President, the Chair and the Vice-Chair of Council and the Treasurer.

#### **5.3.1 WMA Meetings**

**5.3.1.1** Officers and Members of Council attending meetings of the Standing Committees, the Council or the General Assembly (including the Scientific Session) of the WMA will be paid a per diem allowance to cover the cost of the hotel room, meals throughout the day, and transportation to and from the nearest airport or railway station on arrival and departure. The per diem allowance will be paid for the actual days of each meeting plus the day of arrival only.

**5.3.1.2** Similarly, Officers or Members of Council attending an extraordinary meeting, in which they have been designated to participate, normally will be paid a per diem allowance for the actual days of any such meeting, plus the day of arrival at the place of the meeting.

**5.3.1.3** The level of the per diem allowance will be determined annually and notified to those entitled to receive it for attendance on official business. Although the level of the per diem allowance normally will remain the same throughout the year, the Treasurer shall have power to decide on an adjusted rate of allowance for a particular meeting.

**5.3.1.4** If the Secretariat makes special arrangements with a hotel or other meeting place to pay collectively for bedrooms and/or specific meals the per diem allowance will be modified.

**5.3.1.5** Officers and Members of Council traveling to meetings of Workgroups, the Standing Committees, the Council and the General Assembly shall be entitled to be reimbursed reasonable travel costs as determined by the Treasurer in consultation with the Secretary General.

**5.3.1.6** An Officer or Member of Council claiming travel expenses shall do so by completing a travel voucher form which shall be provided by the Secretariat.

#### **5.3.2 Other Meetings and Conferences**

**5.3.2.1** The President is the primary representative of the organization for purposes of invitations, events and appearances. Where appropriate, and to save costs, a designated individual from an NMA member country in the region could be asked to represent the WMA.

**5.3.2.2** A request to represent the WMA should include an opportunity to speak or moderate and should be of significance to the WMA. Exceptions, such as WMA presence at physician trials, may be considered.

**5.3.2.3** Inviting organizations should be asked to send a letter of invitation to WMA headquarters. Invitations are subject to approval by the Chair of Council and the Secretary General. If there is no consensus, the Executive Committee should be consulted.

**5.3.2.4** The Chair of Council will seek to evaluate invitations based on policy, advocacy or membership value to WMA, taking into consideration the cost to the WMA.

- 5.3.2.5** Air or rail fare and reasonable travel expenses are authorized for an approved trip. Business class airfare for travel of four hours or more or first class rail fare over one hour travel is allowed. No per diem will be paid above expenses. Spouse travel is a personal expense. Any unusual expenses that can be anticipated should be discussed in advance with the Chair of Council and the Secretary General.
- 5.3.2.6** When representing the WMA at a National Medical Association's annual meeting, one officer plus the Secretary General may attend.
- 5.3.2.7** Offers of payment of honorarium by the inviting organization will be accepted and transferred to the WMA General Fund.
- 5.3.2.8** Those representing WMA are asked to prepare a brief trip report which will be distributed to the Council and other appropriate WMA participants.
- 5.3.2.9** While representing the WMA, the spokesperson will reflect established policy and will address the priorities of our organization.
- 5.3.2.10** Officers, Members of Council or other individuals from constituent members designated to travel on official business for the Association shall be entitled to receive a per diem allowance and the reimbursement of travel expenses on the same basis as set out in the foregoing paragraphs.
- 5.3.2.11** As part of the organization's annual auditing processes, the Treasurer will review a sample of travel expense vouchers for the past year.

## **5.4 Financial Reporting**

- 5.4.1** The Treasurer shall report to the Council as well as to the Finance and Planning Committee at their regular mid-year and pre-Assembly meetings. These reports shall include detailed analysis of:
- a) the Financial Statement of the previous year, to be presented at the first meeting of each year;
  - b) the essentials of financial development of the current year, in particular for investments, income from membership and investments, expenses for staff and meetings, as well as other financial issues of importance; and
  - c) the Budget for the next year, to be presented at the pre-Assembly meeting of each year.
- 5.4.2** The Treasurer shall, in a timely manner, inform the Secretary General and the Chair of the Finance and Planning Committee of all events that affect the Association finances such that any targets established in the budget for the Association's equity and/or net result of the year cannot be met.

## **5.5 Policy on the Use of Consultants**

The Secretary General is empowered to use consultants to further programs and policies of the Association authorized by the Council and/or the General Assembly, provided that any significant expenditure on the use of such consultants shall be agreed in consultation with the Chair of the Finance and Planning Committee (and, if the latter deems it advisable, with the Committee itself).

## **Chapter 6. Conflict of Interest Policy**

### **6.1 Members of the WMA Secretariat and Officers of the Association**

- 6.1.1** A conflict of interest can occur when an employee or officer of any organization develops a relationship, engages in an activity or has a financial interest which might impair his/her independence of judgment or influence his/her decisions or actions concerning the business of the organization. Therefore, members of the Secretariat and Officers of the Association are expected to exercise discretion in their activities and to avoid any situation which might be subject to question. They are required to preserve and protect WMA assets, which may be used only for the benefit of the Association and not for personal benefit.
- 6.1.2** In particular, members of the Secretariat and Officers of the Association (and their immediate families) should avoid holding any financial interest in, or receiving any personal benefit from, any business which provides services or materials to the WMA. They should not accept from or give to a person or undertaking with which the WMA does business any gifts, money, bribes or other payment in kind. (This does not preclude the occasional exchanges of courtesies of nominal value between members of the Secretariat or Officers and business associates, nor does it preclude individuals, while flying on WMA business, from receiving flight bonus credits in connection with airline incentive programs and using them for business or personal travel.)
- 6.1.3** Members of the Secretariat may not accept other employment which conflicts with their duties for the WMA or prevents them from giving their best efforts to their WMA posts.
- 6.1.4** Members of the Secretariat and Officers of the Association should avoid personal investment transactions that might cause a conflict of interest with their WMA duties and responsibilities.
- 6.1.5** In case of uncertainty as to whether a particular course of action or a particular situation gives rise to a conflict of interest, a member of the Secretariat or Officer should consult with the Secretary General (or, in the case of the Secretary General himself/herself, consult with the Chair of the Council).

### **6.2 WMA Corporate Relationships**

In certain circumstances, the WMA could participate in relationships with corporate bodies if this furthers the WMA's core purpose. However, the WMA should always retain its independence, guard its professional values and avoid conflicts of interest. The guidelines in this section should be used as a starting point for anyone reviewing or developing the WMA's relationship with outside groups, and should be reviewed from time to time to ensure appropriateness and applicability.

#### **6.2.1 General Principles**

- a) The relationship must preserve or promote trust in the WMA and the medical profession.
- b) The relationship must maintain the WMA's objectivity with respect to health issues.

- c) The activity must provide benefit to the public's health, patients' care or the enhancement of physician professionalism.
- d) The WMA's strategic plan must drive the proposed activity.

### **6.2.2 Special Guidelines**

- a) Relationships must not permit or encourage influence by the corporate partner on the WMA's decision-making process.
- b) Participation in a sponsorship program does not imply the WMA's endorsement of an entity or its policies.
- c) To remove any appearance of undue influence on the affairs of the WMA, the WMA should not depend on funding from corporate relations for core governance activities.
- d) Funds from corporate relations must not be used to support political advocacy activities.
- e) The relationship must preserve the WMA's control over any projects and products bearing the WMA name and logo. The WMA retains editorial control over any information produced as part of a corporate / externally funded activity.
- f) Activities should be funded from multiple sources whenever possible.
- g) The WMA may provide health and medical information, but should not involve itself in the production and sale of products that claim a health benefit.
- h) When sponsorships have been received for any part of WMA meetings, full disclosure should be made of such funding during the meeting.



## **Chapter 7. External Relationships and Representation**

### **7.1 Communications from Outside Organizations or Individuals**

- 7.1.1** In general, it shall be the responsibility of the Secretary General to respond to communications from outside organizations and individuals, whatever the form of communication used. However, in circumstances which the Secretary General judges to be appropriate, he/she may delegate the responsibility to another member of the staff.
- 7.1.2** Where a communication is received from an outside organization or individual and it deals with an issue on which the Association has an established policy, the contents of any response from the Association shall conform with that policy.
- 7.1.3** Where a communication is received from an outside organization or individual and it concerns a constituent association, or the behavior or activities of a member or members of the medical profession in the country of a constituent association, it shall be referred for comment initially to the constituent association concerned. Meanwhile, the initial response from the WMA shall do no more than acknowledge receipt of the communication, indicating that it has been referred to the constituent association for comment. In appropriate cases the Secretary General, at his/her discretion, may refer the author of such a communication directly to the constituent association, recommending that the matter might best be handled bilaterally. Where a communication has been referred for comment to a constituent association, any comments received from the latter shall be reflected in the subsequent definitive response to the originator.
- 7.1.4** Where a request is received from an outside organization or individual for a Standing Committee, the Council or the General Assembly of the Association to consider a particular matter relating directly to a constituent association, or the medical profession in the country of that association, the request shall first be referred to the constituent association concerned for comment. The Chair of Council and the Secretary General shall jointly determine whether the request shall be included on the Agenda of the Committee, the Council or the Assembly. In making this determination the Chair and the Secretary General shall take into account the comments of the constituent association concerned. If the request is included on the Agenda, the comments of the constituent association shall be included on the Agenda also. If the Chair and the Secretary General determine that the request shall not be included on the Agenda, the request shall not be pursued, and the originator should be informed, if appropriate.

### **7.2 Communications requesting establishment of "Cooperative Relations" with the WMA**

- 7.2.1** Where a request is received from an outside organization for the official establishment of "cooperative relations" between the organization concerned and the WMA, the request shall be referred through the Finance and Planning Committee to the Council for approval.
- 7.2.2** For approval of a request to establish "cooperative relations" the organization concerned must be international in scope, it should normally relate to the medical profession or medical science, and it must not be represented by a constituent member association or by another organization with whom the WMA already has "cooperative relations". The requesting organization shall be asked to provide a description of its goals, objectives, activities and, if appropriate, its membership.

**7.2.3** If the request is approved, the cooperative arrangements thereafter shall include the regular dispatch of copies of the World Medical Journal and of the annual Report of the Council to the Assembly. In addition, the organization will receive an annual invitation to send an observer to the General Assembly of the WMA, with the understanding that any registrations fees and other expenses shall be paid by the invited organization, unless the fees are specifically waived by the Council.

### **7.3 Media Relations Protocol**

#### **7.3.1 Principles**

- a) All formal public communications will be approved, before their release, by at least two of the following leaders: the President, or President Elect if the President is not available, Chair of Council, and the Secretary General.
- b) All press releases, statements, speeches, briefings, and letters to the editor distributed by the WMA should reflect current WMA policy. No public comment should be made on matters for which there is no official policy without consultation with and approval by the Council.
- c) If public communications relate to a specific issue or activity in a member National Medical Association's (NMA's) country or will otherwise directly affect member NMAs, those associations will be allowed to review and comment within a reasonable time on the communication(s) before release to the media.
- d) If a communication is released to the media despite the objections of a member NMA, that association will be notified of the rationale for the release of the communication.
- e) A final release to the media will be sent to all member NMAs and will be posted on the WMA website in a timely fashion. Members, in turn, are encouraged to forward the communications to their national press and relevant publications, with due credit being given to the source.

#### **7.3.2 Representation and Spokesperson Roles and Responsibilities**

In general, representation of the WMA will be guided by the following:

- a) The Chair of Council and Secretary General, in consultation with the President, have the responsibility for designating a spokesperson who will represent or speak for the WMA on specific occasions.
- b) When WMA officials are contacted directly by the media or by anyone seeking a statement of attribution or background information, the official will, as soon as possible, provide details of any statement made to the WMA media relations staff person.
- c) Designated spokespersons for the WMA, especially the President, President-Elect, Chair of Council and the Secretary-General, must take care that any comments made represent those of the WMA as an organization and not the personal views of the spokesperson. To be safe, assume that all comments are made "on the record."

- d) The highest elected officials of the WMA, i.e., the President and the Chair of Council, are the chief spokespersons of the WMA on issues that reflect new policy, are responsible for the announcement of new initiatives, and act as representatives during a formal or ceremonial function. The President-Elect and Immediate Past President may also be called upon to participate in these duties. In general, these leaders act as the primary ambassadors for the Association and carry general themes to broad audiences throughout the world.
- e) The Chair of Council is the primary spokesperson on issues involving WMA governance, staff, relationships among the various NMAs, general financial matters, or any matters of an internal nature that might be controversial or confrontational.
- f) The Secretary General is the primary spokesperson regarding implementation of existing WMA policy, policies in transition, or new initiatives awaiting consensus. The Secretary General is the primary, though not exclusive, participant in negotiations with key policy makers in the world health arena.

## **Chapter 8. Miscellaneous**

### **8.1 Smoking Policy**

Smoking is not permitted in any meeting room or other area where WMA activities are being conducted.

## **Chapter 9. Suspension**

Any one or more of the provisions of the Procedures and Operating Policies may be suspended at any meeting so far as the provision applies specifically to that meeting and subject to the affirmative vote of 2/3 of the members of the Council present and voting.

## **Chapter 10. Amendment**

Amendment of these Procedures and Operating Policies shall require the affirmative vote of 2/3 of the members of the Council present and voting.