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INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
(IMMUNITIES AND PRIVILEGES) ACT 1948
(SECTION 2)

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
(IMMUNITIES AND PRIVILEGES)
(WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION)
ORDER 1949

ARRANGEMENT OF PARAGRAPHS

Paragraph

1. Citation
 2. Status of World Health Organization
 3. Immunities and privileges of the Organization
 4. Immunities and privileges of representatives of members and of Executive Board of the Organization
 5. Immunities and privileges of Director-General and Deputy Director-General
 6. Immunities and privileges of persons serving on Committees of or employed on missions on behalf of the Organization
 7. Immunities and privileges of other officials of the Organization
 8. Publication of names
 9. Interpretation
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[23 September 1949]

Citation

1. This Order is the International Organisations (Immunities and Privileges) (World Health Organization) Order 1949.

Prepared and Published by

THE LAW REVISION COMMISSION UNDER THE AUTHORITY
OF THE REVISED EDITION OF THE LAWS ACT 1983

3.7.2026

Status of World Health Organization

2.—(1) The World Health Organization (called in this Order the Organization) is an organisation of which the Government and the governments of foreign sovereign Powers are members.

(2) The Organization has the legal capacities of a body corporate.

Immunities and privileges of the Organization

3.—(1) The Organization has immunity from suit and legal process, except insofar as in any particular case it has expressly waived its immunity.

(2) No waiver of immunity is deemed to extend to any measure of execution.

(3) The Organization has the like inviolability of its official archives and premises occupied as offices as is accorded in respect of the official archives and premises of an envoy of a foreign sovereign Power accredited to the Republic of Singapore.

(4) The Organization has the like exemption or relief from taxes and rates, other than taxes on the importation of goods, as is accorded to a foreign sovereign Power.

(5) The Organization has exemption from taxes on the importation of —

(a) goods directly imported by the Organization for its official use in Singapore or for exportation; and

(b) any of the publications of the Organization directly imported by it,

subject to compliance with any condition that the Director-General of Customs may prescribe for the protection of the revenue.

(6) The Organization has exemption from prohibitions and restrictions on importation or exportation —

(a) in the case of goods directly imported or exported by the Organization for its official use; and

(b) in the case of any publication of the Organization directly imported or exported by it.

(7) The Organization has the right to avail itself —

- (a) for telegraphic communications sent by it and containing only matter intended for publication by the press; or
- (b) for broadcasting (including communications addressed to or despatched from places outside Singapore),

of any reduced rate applicable for the corresponding service in the case of press telegrams.

Immunities and privileges of representatives of members and of Executive Board of the Organization

4.—(1) Except insofar as in any particular case any privilege or immunity is waived —

- (a) in the case of representatives of member governments — by the member governments whom they represent; and
- (b) in the case of persons designated to serve on the Executive Board of the Organization and their alternates and advisers — by the Executive Board,

representatives of member governments and persons designated to serve on the Executive Board of the Organization and their alternates and advisers —

- (c) enjoy, while exercising their functions as such, and during their journeys to and from the place of meeting, immunity from personal arrest or detention and from seizure of their personal baggage and inviolability of all papers and documents;
- (d) enjoy immunity from legal process of every kind in respect of words spoken or written and all acts done by them in their capacity as representatives; and
- (e) are not, where the incidence of any form of taxation depends on residence, deemed to be resident in Singapore during any period when they are present in Singapore while exercising their functions or during their journeys to and from the place of meeting.

(2) In this Order, “representatives of member governments” includes their official staff accompanying them as such representatives, who are —

- (a) delegates;
- (b) deputy delegates;
- (c) advisers;
- (d) technical experts; or
- (e) secretaries of delegations.

(3) Sub-paragraphs (1) and (2) do not confer any immunity or privilege on any person —

- (a) as the representative of the Government;
- (b) as a member of the staff of a representative mentioned in sub-paragraph (a); or
- (c) who is a citizen of Singapore.

Immunities and privileges of Director-General and Deputy Director-General

5. Except insofar as in any particular case any privilege or immunity is waived by the Organization, officers of the Organization holding the offices of Director-General and Deputy Director-General are accorded in respect of themselves, their spouses and their children under 21 years of age —

- (a) the like immunity from suit and legal process, the like inviolability of residence and the like exemption or relief from taxes as are accorded to an envoy of a foreign sovereign Power accredited to the Republic of Singapore and the envoy’s spouse and children; and
- (b) exemption from income tax in respect of emoluments received by them as officers of the Organization.

Immunities and privileges of persons serving on Committees of or employed on missions on behalf of the Organization

6. Except insofar as in any particular case any privilege or immunity is waived by the Organization, persons (other than officials of the Organization) serving on Committees of, or employed on missions on behalf of, the Organization enjoy —

- (a) while exercising their functions as such, and during their journeys to and from the place of meeting — immunity from personal arrest or detention and from seizure of their personal baggage and inviolability of all papers and documents relating to the work of the Organization; and
- (b) immunity from legal process of every kind in respect of words spoken or written and all acts done by them in the exercise of their functions, such immunity to continue even though the person concerned is no longer employed on missions on behalf of the Organization.

Immunities and privileges of other officials of the Organization

7. Except insofar as in any particular case any privilege or immunity is waived by the Organization, all officials of the Organization, other than those referred to in paragraph 5, enjoy —

- (a) immunity from suit and legal process in respect of words spoken or written and all acts done by them in the course of the performance of their official duties; and
- (b) exemption from income tax in respect of emoluments received by them as officers or employees of the Organization.

Publication of names

8. The names of the persons to whom paragraphs 4, 5, 6 and 7 apply are to be set out in a list compiled and published from time to time by the President under section 2(3) of the Act, and the list must show in regard to each person —

- (a) the date as from which, for the purposes of this Order, he or she first held the office or employment in question; and

- (b) the date when he or she ceased to hold that office or employment.

Interpretation

9.—(1) This Order has effect as if in paragraph 4 references to representatives of member governments included references to representatives of the governments of Associate Members of the Organization.

(2) In this Order, “representatives of the governments of Associate Members of the Organization” includes their official staff accompanying them as such representatives, who are —

- (a) delegates;
- (b) deputy delegates;
- (c) advisers;
- (d) technical experts; or
- (e) secretaries of delegations.

[Note: The Government of the Republic of Singapore succeeded the World Health Organization on 18 March 1966.]

COMPARATIVE TABLE
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS
(IMMUNITIES AND PRIVILEGES)
(WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION)
ORDER 1949

This subsidiary legislation has undergone renumbering in the 2026 Revised Edition. This Comparative Table is provided to help readers locate the corresponding provisions in the previous version.

2026 Ed.	1990 Ed.
—	A. THE ORGANISATION
2—(1)	2
(2) and 3—(1) and (2)	3
3—(3)	4
(4)	5
(5)	6
(6)	7
(7)	8
—	B. REPRESENTATIVES OF MEMBERS AND OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION
4—(1)	9—(1)
(2)	(2)
(3)	(3)
—	C. HIGH OFFICIALS
5	10
—	D. PERSONS SERVING ON COMMITTEES OF OR EMPLOYED ON MISSIONS ON BEHALF OF THE ORGANISATION
6	11
—	E. OTHER OFFICIALS OF THE ORGANISATION

2026 Ed.	1990 Ed.
7	12
—	F. GENERAL
8	13
9—(1)	14—(1)
(2)	(2)