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Seventeenth Standing Committee of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe Report of the sixth session

This document contains the report of the sixth session of the Seventeenth Standing Committee of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe, which was held in Moscow on Sunday 12 September 2010.

Introduction

1. The Seventeenth Standing Committee of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC) held its sixth and final session at the Holiday Inn Sokolniki, Moscow, on Sunday 12 September 2010, the day before the opening of the sixtieth session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (RC60).
2. In her introductory remarks, the Regional Director informed the SCRC that the Regional Office building had been severely affected by a flood in the middle of August. Infrastructure had been damaged and all the printed copies of documents for RC60 had been destroyed, but fortunately no staff had been injured and the documents (reprinted off site) had been despatched as required.
3. Other parts of the European Region had also experienced natural disasters: the Moscow region of the Russian Federation, in particular, had seen an outbreak of wildfires in July and August, but a team of experts had recently confirmed that air pollution there no longer posed a threat to human health. The Regional Director had made a number of country visits since the Seventeenth SCRC's fifth session (to Georgia, Turkey and Turkmenistan), had attended intergovernmental meetings organized by the Nordic Council of Ministers, WHO headquarters and other bodies, and had held discussions with partner organizations such as the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the European Federation of Medical Associations. She had also briefed heads of diplomatic missions in Copenhagen and Geneva on the agenda of RC60.
4. In response to a question, she confirmed that the post of Director, Programme Management at the Regional Office had recently been filled and selection committees had met to consider candidates for other senior posts, while vacancy notices would shortly be issued for the positions required to carry out the Office's critical core functions.
5. The report of the Seventeenth SCRC's fifth session was approved without amendment.

Review of the provisional programme of the sixtieth session of the Regional Committee

6. The SCRC made a final review of the provisional programme of RC60. The Regional Director noted that the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation would address the Committee at midday the following day, Monday 13 September 2010, while the WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean would do so at the start of the day on Wednesday 15 September. Ministerial lunches (to which heads of delegations were invited) would be held each day during RC60; topics to be discussed on those occasions included the WHO South-Eastern Europe (SEE) Health Network, the European Study on Social Determinants of Health, pandemic H1N1 (2009), the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, the impact of the financial crisis on health and health systems, and the Regional Office's work on strengthening health systems. Technical briefings would also be held at lunchtime and in the early morning, on the subjects listed in the provisional programme.

Membership of WHO bodies and committees

7. The Standing Committee reached agreement by consensus on the candidates that it would recommend for membership of the Executive Board, the SCRC, the Joint Coordinating Board of the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases, and the European Environment and Health Ministerial Board. With regard to candidates for membership of the SCRC, it agreed to present its recommendations once the Regional Committee had expressed its views on the question of an increase in the size of the Standing Committee.

8. With regard to the Consultative Expert Working Group on Research and Development: Financing and Coordination (being established pursuant to World Health Assembly resolution WHA63.28), the SCRC agreed to recommend that all nominations received should be forwarded to the Director-General of WHO for inclusion in a global roster.

Draft plan of work of the Eighteenth SCRC

9. As was customary, the SCRC would hold at least five sessions during its 2010–2011 work year: immediately after RC60 in Moscow, in November 2010 in Andorra, at the end of March or early April 2011 at the Regional Office in Copenhagen, in May 2011 in Geneva, and in September 2011 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

10. The Regional Director noted that topics to be presented to the Eighteenth SCRC (and which she would highlight in her address to RC60 the following day) would include:

- the new European health policy (Health 2020) and a review of the evidence underpinning it;
- strengthening of health systems, and notably of the public health function and linkages with other sectors;
- noncommunicable diseases (including health promotion);
- alcohol policy;
- antimicrobial resistance and multidrug- and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR- and XDR-TB);
- HIV/AIDS;
- the Regional Office's work in countries and its country presence, as well as the activities carried out by its geographically dispersed offices (GDOs);
- strategies on partnerships and on information and communication; and
- "management reports", including use of the Organization's programme budget as a strategic tool for ensuring accountability.

11. The SCRC cautioned that reduced funding by host countries should not lead to GDOs diverting resources away from the Regional Office in Copenhagen.

Other matters

Vice-Chairperson of the Eighteenth SCRC

12. The Standing Committee held a preliminary discussion on filling the post of Vice-Chairperson of the Eighteenth SCRC, while recognizing that the formal decision would be taken by the latter body at its first session.

Draft resolution on the future of financing of WHO

13. The SCRC endorsed, for submission to RC60, a draft resolution on the future of financing of WHO. It agreed that the proposal would be submitted by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (as the country holding the chair of the SCRC) and by a number of other co-sponsoring countries.