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Report of the fifth session

This document contains the report of the fifth and final session of the Twenty-sixth Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC), held in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 15 September 2019, before the opening of the 69th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe. This document should be read in conjunction with the consolidated report on the work of the Twenty-sixth SCRC (document EUR/RC69/4).

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Opening of the session

1. The Twenty-sixth Standing Committee of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC) held its fifth session at UN City in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 15 September 2019. The Chairperson welcomed members and other participants and noted that the report of the fourth session of the Twenty-sixth SCRC, which had taken place in Geneva, Switzerland, on 18 and 19 May 2019, had been circulated and approved electronically.
2. The Deputy Director-General/Regional Director for Europe reported on her work at global level since the previous session. She had concentrated on implementation of the Organization's Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 (GPW 13), and elaboration of operational plans to give effect to the Programme budget 2020–2021. With regard to the transformation process, she was endeavouring to make WHO more results-oriented and country-focused, with global public goods aligned with regional ones, in view of the fact that the Organization's technical cooperation function was now led by the regions. The latter had been instrumental in identifying the technical capacity required at country level. Furthermore, efforts were being made to improve the Organization's normative function and ensure that it was more evidence-based. Third, work was being done on developing a human resources plan for WHO headquarters (as had already been done for the regions). Fourth, steps were being taken to set up networks throughout the Organization, especially those related to specific programme budget outputs and outcomes. And lastly, she had devoted considerable attention to continued implementation of the Strategic Action Plan on Polio Transition (2018–2023).
3. The acting Regional Director gave an update on the work of the Regional Office for Europe since May 2019. Key highlights of the WHO transformation at regional level included the Office-wide development of the Culture Change Plan, which is currently being developed, and the activities of the Change Supporters Network, as well as Regional Office participation in the WHO Academy co-design phase and the establishment of a general service staff task force. Staff from the Danish Ministry of Health's Centre for Pharmaceutical Policy and Internal Affairs had visited the Office on 14 August.
4. The regional high-level conference, Accelerating Progress towards Healthy and Prosperous Lives for All in the WHO European Region, had been held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, from 11 to 13 June, and the European Health Equity Status Report (2019) had been launched in London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, earlier in the week. On 10 September a commentary in *The Lancet* had been published on health equity. The 25th annual meeting of the WHO Regions for Health Network had been held from 26 to 28 June in Aachen, Germany; Maastricht, Netherlands; and Liege and Hasselt, Belgium. The acting Regional Director had attended the closing ceremony of the Second European Games in Minsk, Belarus, on 30 June and had held bilateral meetings with the newly appointed Minister of Health and the Chair of the Parliamentary Commission on Health, Physical Culture, Family and Youth Policy. On 3–4 July, the acting Regional Director had visited Moscow, Russian Federation, to attend the WHO conference on innovative approaches to counteract noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in the European Region and to sign the donor agreement between the Russian Federation and the Regional Office for the NCD project for 2020–2024.
5. The WHO Summer School on Refugee and Migrant Health had been held in Çeşme, Turkey, from 15 to 19 July on the theme: "From emergency response to long-term inclusion policies". In connection with the Third Climate Forum of Cities, held in Moscow, Russian

Federation, on 4–5 September, an agreement had been signed for the city of Moscow to join the WHO Regions for Health Network.

6. During European Development Days 2019, held in Brussels, Belgium, on 18 and 19 June, the Director-General and the European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development had signed the next phase of the universal health coverage partnership programme for 2019–2022, worth US\$ 135 million.

7. The role of parliamentarians in supporting healthy cities in the Commonwealth of Independent States had been underscored at a meeting held in Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, on 31 May. SCRC members from Croatia, Italy and Poland had visited Kyrgyzstan from 18 to 20 June. A consultative meeting in preparation for the technical briefing for parliamentarians at the 69th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (RC69) had been held in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 10 and 11 July.

8. In the area of information, evidence and research, the fifth meeting of the expert group on cultural contexts of health and well-being had been held at the Regional Office on 17 and 18 June, while the sixth Evidence-informed Policy Network Europe multicountry meeting had taken place in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3 to 5 September. Network meetings under the European Health Information Initiative had been organized in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in June and in Berlin, Germany, and Stockholm, Sweden, in August.

9. Key events with regard to communicable diseases had included the first WHO/European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control joint national tuberculosis and HIV programme managers meeting (The Hague, Netherlands, 13–17 May), the eighth meeting of the European Regional Verification Commission for Measles and Rubella Elimination (Warsaw, Poland, 12–14 June) and the Behavioural Insights Summer School (Erfurt, Germany, 26–30 August). World Hepatitis Day had been commemorated on 28 July. Preceded by a meeting of the Antimicrobial Medicine Consumption Network (Copenhagen, Denmark, 28–29 May), the Second Ministerial Conference on Antimicrobial Resistance had been held in Noordwijk, Netherlands, on 19 and 20 June. The Medicines Procurement Practitioners Forum, jointly organized by the Regional Office and UNICEF Supply Division, had met in Copenhagen, Denmark, from 25 to 27 June.

10. A meeting on scaling up emergency health services in eastern Ukraine had been held in Mariupol, Donetsk region, from 24 to 26 June. Between 16 and 19 July, WHO had conducted training for 50 participants from 13 countries in the use of the tool for assessing core capacity requirements for implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) at designated airports, ports and ground crossings.

11. Lastly, in the area of noncommunicable diseases, final conferences had been held to report on the WHO/Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation projects in the Republic of Moldova (16 May) and Ukraine (28–29 May), drawing attention to achievements in the prevention of cardiovascular diseases in primary health care. The Regional Nutrition Capacity Development and Partnership Platform for Central Asia and the Caucasus had held its second coordination meeting in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, from 24 to 26 April. The twelfth meeting of the WHO Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative had taken place in Bergen, Norway, on 13 and 14 June, and a meeting of European Union (EU)/WHO focal points for physical activity had been organized in Brussels, Belgium, from 18 to 20 June. The study “Commercial foods for infants and young children in the WHO European Region” had been launched in Brussels,

Belgium, on 15 July. The “Status report on alcohol consumption, harm and policy responses in 30 European countries” had been issued on 4 September, while an article published online in *The Lancet Public Health* on 3 September found that preventable trauma in childhood cost north America and Europe US\$ 1.3 trillion a year. A meeting on implementation of the global action plan on the public health response to dementia in the WHO European and Eastern Mediterranean regions had been held in Malta on 9 and 10 September.

Provisional agenda and provisional programme of RC69

12. The Deputy Director-General/Regional Director informed the SCRC that, with the aim of aligning the practices followed by regional committees throughout the Organization, it was proposed that the Director-General would deliver his address immediately after the opening of the session, to be followed by the Regional Director and then a discussion of both addresses. The agenda item on lessons learned from Health 2020 implementation would accordingly be taken up on both the first and second days. The whole of the morning of the second day would be devoted to the private meeting of the Regional Committee on elections and nominations. The provisional programme and annotated agenda had been posted on the website of the session, as had the provisional list of participants.

13. In answer to questions raised by members of the SCRC, the Deputy Director-General/Regional Director confirmed that the Director-General would certainly brief the Regional Committee on health security and health emergencies, and notably on the outbreak of Ebola virus disease in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The provisional programme and annotated agenda would be included in the package of documentation given to each delegation upon registration.

Draft resolutions and decisions for RC69

14. The Director, Strategic Partnerships, reported that all draft resolutions and decisions had been revised, if necessary, following consultations with Member States, and had been uploaded to the website of the session in August. Nonetheless, the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee for Europe provided for substantive amendments of such formal proposals to be receivable at least 24 hours prior to the opening of the first day of the session.

15. Proposed amendments to the following draft resolutions had been received:

- from the EU on the Work of the geographically dispersed offices in the WHO European Region (EUR/RC69/Conf.Doc./4 Rev.1);
- from Kazakhstan, the EU and Norway on Accelerating primary health care strengthening (EUR/RC69/Conf.Doc./9);
- from the EU on Accelerating progress towards healthy, prosperous lives for all, increasing equity in health and leaving no one behind in the WHO European Region (EUR/RC69/Conf.Doc./10); and
- from the EU and Norway on Towards the implementation of health literacy initiatives through the life course (EUR/RC69/Conf.Doc./12).

16. The SCRC agreed that the revised versions of those four draft resolutions should be published on the website of the session, on the understanding that groups of countries and individual Member States would have time to review and discuss them informally before they were considered by the Regional Committee in plenary.

Elections and nominations

17. The SCRC met in private to consider the nomination of the Regional Director. It also considered the nomination of two members of the Executive Board and the election of four members of the SCRC, and it agreed on the shortlist of candidates for those two bodies that would be submitted to heads of delegations.

Establishment of the Credentials Committee

18. The SCRC decided that the Credentials Committee would be composed of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the SCRC and the SCRC member from Poland, supported by the Organization's Legal Counsel.

Other matters, closure of the session

19. The Deputy Director-General/Regional Director commended the contributions made by the outgoing members of the SCRC from Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey, as well as by the member from Greece who had served as Chairperson of the Twenty-sixth SCRC.

20. The Executive President of RC68 paid tribute to the leadership of the Deputy Director-General/Regional Director and acting Regional Director.

21. The outgoing members expressed their appreciation for the support they had received from the Secretariat and urged continuing and incoming members to make every effort to maintain the good work done by the Standing Committee.

22. The Chairperson extended his best wishes to his successor, the current Vice-Chairperson of the Standing Committee.

Annex. Agenda

1. Opening by the Chairperson and the Regional Director
2. Adoption of the provisional agenda and the provisional programme
3. Provisional agenda and provisional programme of the 69th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (RC69)
4. Draft resolutions and decisions for RC69
5. Elections and nominations
 - (a) Nomination of the Regional Director
 - (b) Nomination of two members of the Executive Board
 - (c) Election of four members of the Standing Committee of the Regional Committee
6. Establishment of the Credentials Committee
7. Other matters, closure of the session

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