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## **Twenty-fourth Standing Committee of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe – report of the fifth session**

This document contains the report of the fifth and final session of the Twenty-fourth Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC), held in Budapest, Hungary, on 10 September 2017, before the opening of the 67th 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-fourth SCRC (document EUR/RC67/4 Rev.1)

## **Opening of the session**

1. The Twenty-fourth Standing Committee of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC) held its fifth session in Budapest, Hungary, on 10 September 2017. The Chairperson welcomed members and other participants and noted that the report of the fourth session of the Twenty-fourth SCRC, which had taken place in Geneva, Switzerland, on 10–11 May 2017, had been circulated and approved electronically.
2. Reporting on salient events that had taken place since the fourth session, the Regional Director noted that the WHO Director-General elect, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, had attended European Development Days in Brussels on 7 and 8 June 2017 and had been invited to participate on a number of panels. At the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, held in Ostrava, Czech Republic, on 13–15 June 2017, European Member States had committed themselves to the Ostrava Declaration and its priorities. At the end of June 2017, the Regional Director had visited Kazakhstan, to participate in the inaugural meeting of the Primary Health Care Advisory Group, as well as to discuss preparations for the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Alma Ata Declaration. The Fourth High-level Meeting of Small Countries had been hosted by Malta as part of that country's presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU). At an extraordinary meeting of WHO's Global Policy Group, held in Geneva on 8 August 2017, the Director-General had presented his vision of the Organization's Thirteenth General Programme of Work 2019–2023 (GPW13) and underlined his commitment to continue the WHO reform process. The Director-General had also visited the Regional Office at the end of August 2017 and received the newly established Danida Alumni Prize.
3. The provisional agenda (document EUR/SC24(5)/2) and provisional programme (document EUR/SC24(5)/3) of the session were adopted.

## **Provisional agenda and provisional programme of the 67th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (RC67)**

4. The Regional Director presented the provisional agenda and programme for RC67.
5. On the first day of the session, Monday, 11 September 2017, opening statements would be made by the Director-General, the Regional Director, the Prime Minister of Hungary and Her Royal Highness The Crown Princess of Denmark. The Regional Director's comprehensive address and interim report on the work of the Regional Office since RC66 would be followed by a general debate. The report of the Twenty-fourth SCRC would be considered on Monday afternoon, followed by discussion of a draft concept note towards GPW13, a keynote speech by the European Commission's Director-General for Health and Food Safety, and an agenda item on governance in the WHO European Region. A ministerial lunch would offer heads of delegations the opportunity to interact with the Director-General, while a technical briefing would be organized on immunization and migration.
6. The Director-General would address the Regional Committee at the beginning of the Tuesday morning session, followed by consideration of a roadmap to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, building on the Health 2020 policy framework. Keynote addresses would be delivered by the Prime Minister of Greece and the Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey, each followed by a moderated high-level panel discussion and a general

debate. At the end of Tuesday afternoon, the Regional Committee would review the outcomes of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health. The topic for discussion at the ministerial lunch would be mental health, with a technical briefing on ensuring positive outcomes for health at the country level.

7. Two strategic agenda items, the health workforce and access to medicines, would be taken up on Wednesday morning. Following the customary private meeting of the Regional Committee for elections and nominations, the day would conclude with consideration of a technical item on accelerating implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005). Technical briefings would be held on antimicrobial resistance and multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, early childhood development (a priority for the host country) and collaboration on health information and reporting.

8. The final day of the session, Thursday, 14 September 2017, would begin with consideration of the regional plan for implementation of the 2018–2019 programme budget and the presentation of a strategy for partnerships for health in the WHO European Region. On Thursday afternoon, the Regional Committee would consider matters arising from resolutions and decisions of the Seventieth World Health Assembly and the Executive Board, and would receive a number of progress reports before the closure of the session. A technical briefing on “big data” would be organized during the lunch break, when the Twenty-fifth SCRC would also hold its first session.

9. The Regional Director considered that the agenda of the session was heavy but manageable. Several agenda items would be introduced by video presentations portraying “Voices of the Region”.

## **Keep the World Safe, Improve Health, Serve the Vulnerable: draft concept note towards WHO’s Thirteenth General Programme of Work 2019–2023**

10. The Director, Division of Health Emergencies and Communicable Diseases, presented the draft concept note towards GPW13. That General Programme of Work would be shaped by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Director-General’s vision and a strategic review of ongoing global and regional commitments. Those three areas were interrelated, not mutually exclusive, and reinforced each other. GPW13 would: focus on outcomes and impact; be fully aligned with health-related SDG targets and indicators; set clear priorities and follow them through; make WHO more operational but at the same time strengthen its normative and technical functions; place countries squarely at the centre of WHO’s work; and provide political leadership with a strong focus on equity.

11. The draft concept note set out initial ideas concerning the evolving strategic priorities for the Organization. They were to: prevent, detect and respond to epidemics; provide health services in emergencies, and help operate and restore health systems; help countries strengthen health systems to achieve universal health coverage; drive progress towards the health-related SDGs; and provide the world’s platform for collective decision-making on health.

12. It was proposed that GPW13 would cover the period from 2019 to 2023, in order to serve as the organizing framework for two programme budgets, 2020–2021 and 2022–2023.

The goal was to have GPW13 approved by the Seventy-first World Health Assembly in May 2018. The benefits of that timeline included: ensuring a rapid pivot from planning to implementation, having one year to fully align the programme budget 2020–2021 with GPW13, and providing a framework within which to pursue the necessary resource mobilization in a timely and coherent manner. To that end, a special two-day session of the Executive Board was proposed to be organized at the end of November 2017, following a broad consultation, including through the WHO regional committees, to discuss an initial draft of GPW13.

13. Members of the SCRC welcomed the more political tone of the concept note and the bottom-up approach to development of GPW13, with extensive involvement of WHO staff, partners and Member States. They were in favour of holding a special session of the Executive Board and looked forward to contributing to the web-based consultation.

### **Draft resolutions and decisions for RC67**

14. The WHO Representative to the EU reported that four important but minor amendments to draft resolutions had been received from EU member countries. The SCRC agreed that the representative speaking on behalf of the EU and its member countries at RC67 should be requested to present each amendment under the respective agenda item.

### **Membership of WHO bodies and committees**

15. The SCRC met in private to consider the nomination of members of the Executive Board and the election of members of the SCRC and of the Policy and Coordination Committee of the Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction.

### **Composition of the Credentials Committee**

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

### **Closing of the session**

17. One SCRC member called for more careful consideration to be given in future to the nomination of officers of the Organization's governing bodies (such as the Executive Board and its Programme, Budget and Administration Committee), in view of the increased strategic role for those officers as envisaged by the Director-General.

18. The outgoing members of the SCRC paid tribute to the Chairperson and thanked members of the Secretariat for their support.