



EUROPE

**Eleventh Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe
Fourth session**

**Geneva, Palais des Nations, Salle VII
Sunday, 16 May 2004, 13.00–16.00**

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Report of the fourth session

Opening by the Chairperson and the Regional Director

1. The Eleventh Standing Committee of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC) held its fourth session at the Palais des Nations in Geneva on 16 May 2004, chaired by the Vice-Chairman.
2. In his introductory remarks, the Regional Director outlined the statement that he intended to make at the meeting of representatives of European Member States to be held immediately after the SCRC's fourth session. He would consider the implications of the recent enlargement of the European Union (EU) on the work of the WHO Regional Office for Europe (EURO), while assuring the non-EU member countries in WHO's European Region that the Organization would continue to work closely with each and every Member State. He would also note with satisfaction the support given by European Member States to the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, and the emphasis placed by them on the problem of obesity.
3. He would announce that all negotiations with Member States on detailed implementation of the 2004-2005 programme budget had been completed, and that EURO was finalizing preparation of a set of proposals for specific projects in countries; that "supplementary budget" would be used for fundraising purposes and negotiations with WHO headquarters on the allocation of voluntary donations, and it would also form the baseline for the budget implementation report to be submitted to the Regional Committee at the end of the biennium, in 2006.
4. In conclusion, he would very briefly describe the direction that he would give to EURO's work in the five years to come if he were to be re-elected as Regional Director for a further term of office.
5. The SCRC agreed that the recent enlargement of the EU was an important subject that deserved to be placed on the agenda of one of its future sessions but sounded a note of caution about considering the non-EU Member States as a homogeneous group. It welcomed the increase in transparency and accountability represented by an explicit supplementary budget for 2004-2005, which quantified EURO's requirements for voluntary donations at US\$ 116 million.
6. The SCRC confirmed the view expressed by the WHO Regional Committee for Europe at its fifty-third session in 2003 (RC53) with regard to the need to make a full evaluation of the implementation of World Health Assembly resolution WHA51.31, on regular budget allocations to regions. Furthermore, the SCRC recommended that European Member States should be made aware that the Fifty-seventh World Health Assembly might decide to discontinue implementation of resolution WHA51.31. If that proved to be the case, European Member States would be well advised to take an active part in drawing up alternative proposals and should contact SCRC members for further briefing, if necessary.

Adoption of the provisional agenda and the provisional programme

7. The provisional agenda and provisional programme were adopted without amendment.

Review of draft resolutions to be presented to RC54

8. In line with recommendations made at a recent expert meeting, the Secretariat proposed a number of amendments to the draft resolution on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases in the European Region (document EUR/RC54/Conf.Doc./3). A member of the SCRC recommended that Europe should not be singled out, in comparison with other regions, in the second introductory paragraph, and that a reference should be made to physical activity in the fifth introductory paragraph.
9. The SCRC recommended that the second operative paragraph of the draft resolution on EURO's strategy with regard to geographically dispersed offices (GDOs) (document EUR/RC54/Conf.Doc./4)

should be amended to provide for the Regional Director to consult with the SCRC when planning to establish a GDO.

10. The SCRC also recommended that the first two operative paragraphs of the draft resolution on environment and health (document EUR/RC54/Conf.Doc./5) should be deleted, and that the word "quantify" should be replaced by "assess" in the second bullet of operative paragraph 10.

11. Notwithstanding the sizeable donation recently made by the Canadian government to the "3x5" initiative on HIV infection/AIDS, the SCRC agreed to the draft resolution on the proposed programme budget for 2006-2007.

Follow-up to issues discussed at previous sessions of the Regional Committee

12. The new item would cover follow-up to (a) the European Health Report, (b) the update of the European regional policy framework for health for all (HFA), (c) the Regional Office's country strategy, (d) tuberculosis and (e) mental health, which would be reported on in an RC working paper. The SCRC agreed with the proposal that the oral presentation to RC54 would focus on three major issues: (a), (b) and (c).

13. It also agreed that the Regional Director's biennial report on the work of WHO in the European Region could be structured in terms of the various processes that EURO was engaged in (such as country work, partnerships, or maintaining technical competence), rather than by individual programme activities, as had previously been the practice.

14. Lastly, the SCRC recommended that technical discussions should be organized at RC54 on the subject of "The health system's response to health crises".

Membership of WHO bodies and committees

15. The SCRC made an initial review of the candidatures for membership of the Executive Board, the SCRC and the Joint Coordinating Board of the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases in the light of the provisions of Regional Committee resolution EUR/RC53/R1, with a view to assisting its Chairman in his discussions with Member States' delegations during the forthcoming World Health Assembly.

16. One member suggested that, other things being equal, gender balance should be taken into account when the SCRC came to make its proposal to RC54.

Review of the provisional agenda for the Fifty-seventh World Health Assembly

17. The Regional Director drew attention to a number of items on the provisional agenda for the Fifty-seventh World Health Assembly and its Committees A and B that might be of particular interest to European Member States.

18. The SCRC noted that the Executive Board session immediately following the World Health Assembly was now a four-day business meeting, at which substantive items were discussed, and confirmed that it would be useful if European members of the Board were invited to give prior warning (at the meeting to be held immediately after the SCRC's fourth session) of any issues which they intended to raise on that occasion.