



**EUROPE**

**Fourteenth Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe  
First session**

**Copenhagen, 14 September 2006**

---

EUR/RC56/SC(1)/REP  
31 October 2006  
61621  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**Report of the first session**



## Introduction

1. The Fourteenth Standing Committee of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC) held its first session at the WHO Regional Office for Europe on 14 September 2006, immediately after the closure of the fifty-sixth session of the Regional Committee (RC56).
2. In his introductory remarks, the Chairman extended a welcome to the newly elected members and alternates from Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Norway.

## Election of the Vice-Chairperson

3. On a proposal by the Chairman, seconded by the member from Italy, the Standing Committee unanimously elected Ms Annemiek van Bolhuis (Netherlands) as Vice-Chairperson of the Fourteenth SCRC.

## Initial assessment of RC56

4. The SCRC felt that RC56 had been very well prepared and organized. It had been sensible to limit the agenda to a few main items, and there had been good links between the plenary discussions and the technical briefings. However, it had been an organisational challenge accommodating four technical briefings in RC56. In future, therefore, consideration should be given to limiting the number of technical briefings to three.
5. The presentations by the Secretariat had been pertinent and concise, although many of the working papers had exceeded the limit of 8–10 pages previously set by the SCRC. The practice of having SCRC members present the Standing Committee's views on each substantive agenda item was endorsed, but it was suggested that those presentations should be discussed and reviewed when the SCRC met on the day before the RC session, to ensure that the consensus views of the group were indeed put forward.
6. The SCRC emphasized that the well-prepared sessions on the European strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and on enhancing health security now needed to be followed up. It believed that most Member States had appreciated the clear vision and complementarity with the Organization's draft medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 (MTSP) that had been apparent from the presentation and discussion on the future of the WHO Regional Office for Europe. It welcomed the clarity with which the Organization's proposed programme budget 2008–2009 and MTSP had been presented, and it particularly appreciated the address by the Acting Director-General. It paid tribute to the exceptionally positive message and enthusiasm conveyed by the Patron of the Regional Office, Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Mary of Denmark, during her address to the Regional Committee.
7. With regard to the agenda item on elections and nominations to WHO bodies and committees, the SCRC recognized that the criteria used for selecting candidates would need to be reviewed at its session at the end of November 2006. It also agreed that it should devote more of its session on the eve of the World Health Assembly in May each year to making a detailed review of the candidatures received, so as to be in a position to hold further discussions with Member States' delegations during the Health Assembly.

## **Draft plan of work for the Fourteenth SCRC, 2006–2007**

8. In addition to the customary items that it would take up at its second session (to be held in The Hague on 30 November and 1 December 2006), the SCRC confirmed that it wished to review the criteria used in elections and nominations to WHO bodies. It also looked forward to reviewing the latest developments with regard to the proposed programme budget 2008–2009, and notably the questions of regional allocations to proposed priority areas, as a follow-up to the debate that had been held at RC56 and in preparation for the discussions at the meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee and the Executive Board session in January 2007.

9. The SCRC noted that the process of nominating and appointing a new Director-General of the Organization was well advanced, and that it would not be appropriate to become involved, as a committee, in that process. Nonetheless, it suggested that some time might be set aside at its second session to consider the implications for the European Region of the appointment that would be made by the Health Assembly at its special session on 9 November 2006.

10. The SCRC also confirmed that at its May session it wished to concentrate on reviewing candidatures for membership of WHO bodies. However, that might have repercussions on the time available to review drafts of working papers and resolutions on technical subjects to be taken up at the RC session later in the year. In any case, the timing of preparation of papers was not ideal: there was little time between the presentation of an outline of papers to the SCRC in March and then a full draft in May, while some documents still required further work in June and even July. The Secretariat was asked to submit to the SCRC at its next session a proposal for improving that process.