



EUROPE

Sixteenth Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe Special session

**Teleconference
18 June 2009**

EUR/RC58/SC(special)/REP
17 September 2009
91320
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Report of the special session

Introduction

1. Following a decision taken at its fourth meeting on 17 May 2009, the Sixteenth Standing Committee of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC) held a special session by teleconference on 18 June 2009 to give members the opportunity to comment further on drafts of papers being prepared for submission at the fifty-ninth session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (RC59). As a result of technical problems, Dr Boban Mugosa (Montenegro) could not be connected to the meeting, and Dr Josep Casals (Andorra), Dr Danka Farkasova (Slovakia), Dr Vladimir Lazarevik (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and Dr Marat Mambetov (Kyrgyzstan) were connected for only part of the meeting.

Adoption of the provisional agenda

2. The provisional agenda was adopted without amendment.

Review of the provisional programme of the fifty-ninth session of the Regional Committee (RC59)

3. During the fourth session of the SCRC, the Secretariat had been asked to consider organizing a technical briefing during RC59 on the subject of the influenza pandemic. The SCRC agreed that such a briefing should replace that scheduled on tuberculosis, with the follow-up to the Berlin Declaration on Tuberculosis being included for discussion under agenda item 8, Follow-up to previous sessions of the Regional Committee: Progress made towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals, on the morning of Wednesday 16 September.

Final review of draft documents and draft resolutions for RC59

4. The Deputy Regional Director noted that comments on the draft documents for RC59 had been received from Norway, the Netherlands and Switzerland. The Secretariat would request clarification on a number of points from the Member States concerned, before incorporating some of the comments and sending out the final versions of the draft documents and draft resolutions.

SCRC members to present the SCRC's views on RC59 technical/policy subjects – consensus of views

5. The Deputy Regional Director reported that some feedback on the introductions prepared by the Secretariat had been received; when all the members concerned had responded, the comments would be circulated to the SCRC for reaction.

Offers received to host future sessions of the Regional Committee

6. The SCRC took note of the written invitations extended by Azerbaijan, Portugal and Turkey to host the session of the Regional Committee in 2011, and of Azerbaijan and Malta to host the session in 2012. The Chairperson welcomed the fact that several Member States had expressed their willingness to host sessions of the Regional Committee in the coming years and recalled that the fourth session of the SCRC had agreed on the importance of maintaining a geographical balance. The SCRC accordingly decided to recommend to the Regional

Committee that its sixty-first session could be held in Turkey and its sixty-second session in Malta. The Secretariat was asked to contact Azerbaijan to discuss whether it would be prepared to host the sixty-third session.

Distribution of European seats on the Executive Board and criteria for selection

7. The Chairperson noted that two issues related to the distribution of seats and criteria for selection needed to be explored by the Regional Committee at its forthcoming session: the use of subregional country groupings and the practice of semi-permanent membership of the Executive Board. The general feeling among Member States was that selection should focus on the qualities of individuals; the criteria for selection could be changed to ensure geographical representation without specifying strict subregional groupings.

8. During the Sixty-second World Health Assembly, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson had approached France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom regarding a possible review of the practice of semi-permanency, with a view to discussion on the matter at RC59.

9. The SCRC agreed that an annex presenting a review of experiences in connection with the membership criteria should be attached to the RC59 document on governance, to stimulate discussion and to propose the establishment of a working group, mandated to report back to RC60.

Other matters

Proposed draft resolution on blood products

10. Denmark had proposed a draft resolution to be put to RC59 on Delineation of tasks with the Council of Europe in the field of blood safety and organ transplantation. It was agreed that Denmark should consult other Member States on the issue, to attract co-sponsors for the draft resolution, and would contact the Council of Europe to ensure that its representative was informed in good time of the forthcoming discussion at RC59.

Report of the Regional Search Group

11. Noting that the report of the Regional Search Group had been finalized and was currently being translated, the Chairperson agreed to request clarification from Legal Counsel at WHO headquarters as to the subsequent normal procedure, according to rules and practices.

12. He further suggested that, depending on the content of the report, it might be useful to hold a moderated debate between the short-listed candidates before RC59, to be organized by a third party and streamed on the Internet, to give Member States a better opportunity to assess their competence. The SCRC welcomed the proposal but there were some concerns about the SCRC itself entering the process of electing a new Regional Director.