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Twelfth Standing Committee of the Regional Committee Report of the fifth session

This document contains the report of the fifth session of the Twelfth Standing Committee of the Regional Committee (SCRC), held at the J.W. Marriott Bucharest Grand Hotel on Sunday 11 September 2005.

Introduction

1. The Twelfth Standing Committee of the Regional Committee (SCRC) held its fifth session at the J.W. Marriott Bucharest Grand Hotel on Sunday 11 September 2005. Dr Katrin Saluvere, the member from Estonia, had taken up a post with the European Commission and had therefore been replaced by Mrs Triin Habicht. In the interest of transparency, the SCRC was informed that Mrs Habicht, in addition to occupying the post of Head of the Health Policy Unit in the Public Health Department at the Ministry of Social Affairs, was also the wife of the WHO Liaison Officer in Estonia.

2. The Regional Director said that all staff at the WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/EURO) had been involved in preparations for the fifty-fifth session of the Regional Committee (RC55), and that they would be able to follow the discussions through a Web-based link. In addition, the Secretariat had been working on 11 internal development processes linked to the commitments he had made when he had been elected as Regional Director. A booklet on those processes would be made available to members of the SCRC.

Review of the provisional programme of RC55

3. A revised version of the provisional programme of RC55 (document EUR/RC55/3 Rev.1) had been issued on 7 September 2005. The WHO Director-General would deliver his address on the Monday morning, 12 September, after the opening of the session, following which the Regional Director would present his report. The remainder of the first day would largely be spent “setting the scene”, with consideration of the report of the Twelfth SCRC (to be presented by the Chairman) and the agenda item on matters arising out of resolutions and decisions of the World Health Assembly and the Executive Board (to be introduced by Dr Danielle Hansen-Koenig, the European member of the Board chosen to attend the SCRC as an observer).

4. The SCRC agreed that Professor Ara Babloyan would present its views on the European strategy for child and adolescent health and development, including strengthening national immunization systems. *The European health report 2005*, a recent WHO/EURO publication, would be an important source of background information for that item.

5. Dr David Harper would present the SCRC’s views on strengthening health systems and Dr Jens Kristian Gøtrik would summarize its discussions on the framework for alcohol policy in the WHO European Region, both of which were technical agenda items due to be considered in the morning of Tuesday 13 September. Dr Božidar Voljč and Dr Hubert Hrabčík would do likewise, respectively, for the agenda items on the 2005 update of the Health for All policy framework and on injuries in the WHO European Region, which would be taken up in the morning of Wednesday 14 September.

6. A number of guest speakers had been invited to address the Regional Committee following the discussion of each agenda item. Mr Markos Kyprianou, European Union (EU) Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection, would address the Regional Committee after the Regional Director had delivered his report. Dr Anders Nordström, Assistant Director-General, General Management, WHO headquarters, would speak on the question of the share of WHO resources between regions as from the biennium 2008–2009, under the agenda item on matters arising from the Health Assembly and the Board. Sir Liam Donaldson, Chief Medical Officer of the United Kingdom, would discuss the question of patient safety under the item on strengthening health systems; Mrs Zsuzsanna Jakab, the Director of the European Centre for Disease Control, would take up the question of child and adolescent health, and representatives of GTZ (the German technical cooperation agency) and the Alliance for Child Safety would talk on the subject of injuries.

Membership of WHO bodies and committees

7. The SCRC was informed that only one more Member State needed to accept the amendments to Articles 24 and 25 of the WHO Constitution for them to enter into force, and Dr Hrabcik noted that Austria intended to do so in the very near future. As a result, it was extremely likely that the European Region would gain an extra seat on the Executive Board as from the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly. In accordance with the recommendations of an SCRC subgroup as endorsed by the Regional Committee itself in resolution EUR/RC53/R1, that additional seat would be allocated to the geographical group of 20 Member States which included the Commonwealth of Independent States and countries in south-east Europe.

8. The SCRC accordingly reached agreement by consensus on the four countries that it would recommend to put forward their candidatures for membership of the Executive Board, proposing three for designation under the existing circumstances and one for designation should an extra seat become available.

9. In addition, the SCRC reached consensus on the countries that it would recommend for membership of the Standing Committee and of the Policy and Coordination Committee of the Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction.

Other matters

Draft plan of work of the Thirteenth SCRC, 2005–2006

10. Dr Hrabcik confirmed Austria's invitation to the SCRC to meet in Vienna on 21 and 22 November 2005.

Outgoing members

11. Professor Marija Strnad and Professor Babloyan thanked the members of the SCRC and the Regional Director and his staff for the experience they had gained through their membership of the Standing Committee. Dr Voljč said it had been an honour to represent not only his country but also the Region as a whole, and he acknowledged the broader appreciation of ethical values that he had gained during his time on the SCRC.