



EUROPE

Fifteenth Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe

(informal extra session for SCRC members attending the WHO European Ministerial Conference on Health Systems – Tallinn, 25–27 June 2008)

Tallinn, 27 June 2008

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Report of the extra session

Introduction

1. The Fifteenth Standing Committee of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (SCRC) held an extra session in Tallinn, Estonia on Friday 27 June 2008, immediately after the close of the WHO European Ministerial Conference on Health Systems. Apologies for absence were received from Professor Tomica Milosavljević (Serbia) and Ms Dana Farkašová (Slovakia), as well as from Dr David Harper (Executive President of the fifty-seventh session of the Regional Committee – RC57) and Dr Božidar Voljč (Executive Board member from the WHO European Region).

Membership of WHO bodies and committees

2. Following a private meeting, the Chairperson of the SCRC reported that it had solved the potential problem of one country putting forward candidatures for membership of both the Regional Search Group and the Standing Committee. With regard to candidatures for membership of the Standing Committee, the SCRC agreed that nominations received after the deadline were inadmissible, and further discussed the three candidates that could be recommended to the Regional Committee.

3. Interim consensus was reached on candidates for three of the four upcoming vacant seats for the European Region on the Executive Board. The final decision on the recommended candidates would be reached at the final session of the SCRC in Batumi, Georgia. The SCRC recalled that at its previous session it had reached agreement on the candidate it would recommend for membership of the Policy and Coordination Committee of the Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction.

Review of outcomes of the Ministerial Conference

4. The Standing Committee commended the host country, Estonia, and the WHO Secretariat on the excellent organization and the outcome of the Ministerial Conference. Following its successful conclusion, a process would be launched to ensure that the various parties (Member States, WHO and partner organizations) fulfilled the commitments they had entered into by adopting the Tallinn Charter. The first step in that process, the Standing Committee agreed, would be to incorporate the salient points agreed at Tallinn in the RC58 working paper on stewardship/governance of health systems in the WHO European Region, and to add an operative paragraph in the corresponding draft resolution whereby the Regional Committee would endorse the Charter and outline two or three areas where follow-up action should be taken, with the results reported back to the Regional Committee in 2010. While some members of the SCRC echoed the call made by the delegation of the Russian Federation at the Conference to the effect that a detailed action plan should now be drawn up, others noted that such plan could only be developed after RC58 and that, in any case, an action plan was a classic tool for a vertical approach and might not be the best approach for health systems. Comparisons, case studies of best practice, guidelines, etc. could be more appropriate for work on health systems.

5. Two issues related to health systems that had been discussed at the Conference, namely migration of health personnel and the social determinants of health, would be on the agenda of the Sixty-second World Health Assembly in 2009 and therefore merited particular attention. The former would be covered under the RC58 agenda item on stewardship/governance, while the latter would be the subject of a technical briefing; in that connection, the SCRC was pleased to learn that the report of the Commission on the Social Determinants of Health was due to be released in August 2008 and that its chairman, Professor Sir Michael Marmot, would be attending the Regional Committee session.

6. The SCRC believed that it would be important to more explicitly identify key messages from the Tallinn Conference, as had been done following the Alma-Ata Conference on Primary Health Care.

Review of the RC58 draft resolution on Behaviour change strategies and health: the role of health systems

7. The SCRC endorsed the draft resolution, which had been revised in the light of comments made at its previous session.

Review of presentations by SCRC members on RC58 technical/policy subjects – consensus of views

8. The SCRC agreed with the outlines of the presentations that its members would make when introducing the RC58 agenda items on stewardship/governance, behaviour change, the Organization's proposed programme budget 2010–2011 and the process of reporting back on resolutions adopted at previous RC sessions. A final review of those presentations could be made at the Fifteenth SCRC's final session.

9. The Chairperson of the SCRC asked its members to let her have their views on which topics she should highlight in her presentation of the SCRC's consolidated report, as well as photographs of themselves in work settings, if possible related to WHO.