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Ihr Zeichen:
На Ваш номер:

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Dr David Sergeenko
Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs
Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs
144, Ak. Tsereteli Ave.
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Dear Dr Sergeenko,

**Invitation to the European members of governing bodies to visit country offices
of the WHO Regional Office for Europe**

The 13th General Programme of Work of WHO, currently under discussion, emphasizes the need to put countries at the centre of WHO's work. This will undoubtedly result in more discussions on the added value and the impact that WHO has at country level with Member States attending governing body sessions. For these discussions to be constructive, it is important to ensure that Member States at the governing bodies are well informed on WHO's way of working.

In order to provide insight into WHO's work at country level, and to further clarify how the organization provides added value in achieving positive outcomes for health, the Standing Committee of the Regional Committee (SCRC) set up a subgroup on **Countries at the centre: the role of WHO at country level**. The subgroup agreed that one way the WHO Regional Office for Europe could provide some insight into its work at country level could be through a number of country visits. These visits would support and facilitate the discussions taking place in governing body sessions, by providing governing body members with an opportunity to see how far WHO has managed to influence the strategic developments of countries, through the country offices (CO) and sub offices, and also through the centres of excellence – the geographically dispersed offices (GDO).

WHO Regional Office for Europe is therefore organizing a series of visits to show how the Regional Office provides technical guidance and support to work taking place at country level in an integrated and coordinated manner, linking back to the global policies and actions agreed at the World Health Assembly. The aim of these visits will be to show how WHO assists ministries of health by coordinating health partners at country level as well as providing technical assistance. These visits will also provide the country and the country office with an opportunity to showcase the success stories resulting from WHO's support to the country, through the various methods available. The work of the country offices and the roles of the WHO representatives and other staff will also feature in the visit and participants will learn of the resources made available at country level, including the role of the WHO representatives and their staff in health leadership, diplomacy, negotiation, partnerships, resource mobilization, communication and advocacy, and technical assistance.

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During the country office visit, participants will also have an opportunity to hear about the relationships with the ministries of health and other ministries at country level, as well as with other stakeholders in the country, including sister United Nations agencies, health donors, public health institutes and others.

At the recent SCRC session in Georgia, committee members also reviewed the achievements of Georgia supported by WHO. It was a successful event and Member States truly benefited from it, and it is therefore planned to organize a session on Georgia during the 142nd session of the Executive Board, to which European Executive Board members are cordially invited on Wednesday, 24 January 2018, at 13:00 hours at the WHO Headquarters.

The SCRC decided that the countries to be visited will be Turkey, the Russian Federation, Slovenia and Kyrgyzstan, all of which have a very different country office set-up and provide assistance through different methods. The dates of these visits will be as follows.

- **1–3 February 2018: Turkey Country Office, Ankara, and a visit to the Gaziantep Sub Office.** This visit will provide an overview of a WHO country office in operational mode while continuing day-to-day routine activities with the ministry of health and other stakeholders.
- **1–3 March 2018: Russian Federation Country Office, Moscow, and a visit to the GDO on noncommunicable diseases.** This visit will demonstrate how a country office works at the country level, backstopped by the Regional Office and its GDO.
- **5–7 April 2018: Slovenia Country Office, Ljubljana.** This is a small country office in a high-income country which is also a member of the European Union. The important role of a country presence in a high-income country will be explained.
- **3–5 May 2018: Kyrgyzstan Country Office, Bishkek.** This is a country office that provides technical assistance aimed to further strengthen the health system. This office employs various methods to assist the country, including policy dialogue, strategic support, technical assistance and service delivery.

The visits to these country offices will run over two days – a day focusing on the country office and a day meeting with relevant health stakeholders in the country.

On the country office day, governing body members will visit the country office, where they will be welcomed by the Regional Director or her representative and the country's minister of health. A senior official/national counterpart of the country will present a health overview of the country, its priorities and challenges, and also its health achievements. Participants will then hear from the WHO representative about the role of the country office, and the financial resources available at country level, and from the staff, who will explain their various roles and responsibilities. Where relevant, there will also be a field visit to a sub office or to a GDO.

The stakeholder day will include meetings with various stakeholders at country level including ministers/deputy ministers of health, other ministers, the chair of the parliamentary committee, the prime minister, the United Nations Resident Coordinator, and other high-level partners.

Through this email, I would like to invite you to join one of the missions listed above. It would be greatly appreciated if you would send your response to Dr Lucianne Licari (email: licaril@who.int) by 22 December, so that the secretariat can proceed with all the necessary logistical arrangements. Each mission will consist of a maximum of four participants, who will be chosen on a first come, first served basis. For this reason you are kindly asked to let the secretariat know your first and second choice of mission.

Dear Minister, please accept, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours very truly,



Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab
Regional Director