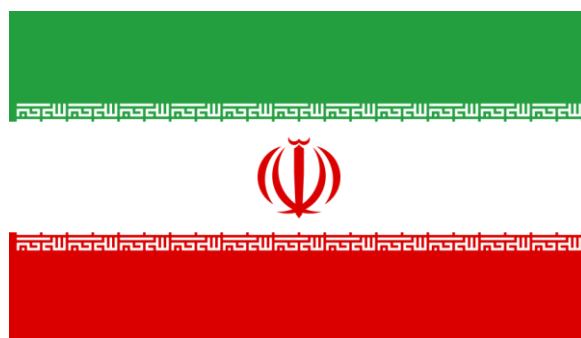




**Sixty-sixth Session of the WHO Regional Committee for the
Eastern Mediterranean,
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 14-17 October 2019**

Information bulletin 1





Introduction

Provinces

The Islamic Republic of Iran has 31 provinces, comprising more than 450 districts. Each province, governed by a Governor General appointed by the Ministerial Cabinet, has at least one University of Medical Sciences responsible for public health and medical education.

Population

According to the 2016 census and subsequent estimations in 2018, the country has a population of over 82 million.

Neighbouring countries

Islamic Republic of Iran has one of the longest land borders of any country in western Asia covering 5894 kilometres in length. It shares land borders with seven countries: Iraq, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. Iraq to the west shares its entire eastern land border with Islamic Republic of Iran. Armenia's border with Islamic Republic of Iran is the shortest at 44 kilometres.

Location

Located in Southwest Asia and the Middle East, the Islamic Republic of Iran is the 18th largest country in the world in terms of area at 1 648 195 square kilometres. Throughout history, Islamic Republic of Iran has been of geostrategic importance because of its central location in Eurasia and as a regional power.

Economy

In 2017, Islamic Republic of Iran's estimated gross domestic product was US\$ 447.7 billion. Its economy is dominated by the hydrocarbon sector, agriculture and services sectors, and a noticeable state presence in manufacturing and financial services. It ranks second in the world in natural gas reserves and fourth in crude oil reserves. Economic activity and government revenues still depend to a large extent on oil revenues

Iranian authorities have adopted a comprehensive strategy encompassing market-based reforms as reflected in the Government's 20-year vision document and the sixth 5-year development plan for 2016–2021. This 5-year development plan comprises three pillars – developing a resilient economy, making advances in science and technology and promoting cultural excellence. In 2017, it saw economic growth of 3.8% and reform of state-owned enterprises, the financial and banking sector, and the allocation and management of oil revenues as among the main priorities of the government

Its economy is a mixed and transitional economy with a large public sector. Over 40 industries are directly involved in the Tehran Stock Exchange, one of the best performing exchanges in the world over the past decade. With 10% of the world's proven oil reserves and 15% of its gas reserves, it is considered an energy superpower.

Language

Persian (Farsi) is the predominant and official language; however, English is also widely spoken.

Culture

It is home to one of the world's oldest continuous major civilizations, with historical and urban settlements dating back to 7000 BC. Islamic Republic of Iran's culture is deeply intertwined with its long and rich history, especially from the Persian Empire. Its cultural heritage is preserved in its contemporary art, literature, architecture, and music Persian artifacts can be seen in many leading museums around the world, such as the British Museum and the Louvre in Paris.

Tehran

Tehran is the capital city with a population of around 8.4 million in the city and over 13 million in the larger metropolitan area of Greater Tehran. Tehran is the most populous city in Islamic Republic of Iran and western Asia, and has the second-largest metropolitan area in the Middle East. It is ranked 29th in the world in terms of population of its metropolitan area.

More than half of the country's industry is based in Tehran. It is also a leading hub for the sale of carpets and furniture. There is an oil refinery south of the city. Tehran is a sprawling city at the foot of the Alborz mountain range with an immense network of highways unparalleled in western Asia. It is also the hub of the country's railway network.

Health system reform

The Islamic Republic of Iran is strongly committed to primary health care and has adopted innovative approaches to strengthening primary health care. Over three decades, the country has been expanding basic health services to the population, especially in rural areas and to the poorer segments of society. As many as 17 000 health houses cover nearly 100% of the rural population, and community health workers (known as *behvarz*) deliver primary health care services to people's doorstep. This approach has increased coverage and access to services and health indicators have shown significant improvement.

In 2012, the Government explicitly made health one of its major domestic priorities. The Supreme Leader provided a vision for the health sector characterized by principles and values such as providing comprehensive and integrated equity-based health care, prioritizing prevention over treatment and ensuring sustainable financing for the health sector. Accordingly, in May 2014, the Government unveiled its Health Transformation Plan to achieve universal health coverage and reform the health sector. The overarching aim of the Plan is to achieve universal health coverage by 2025 – five years before the target date of the Sustainable Development Goals. Although the plan's interventions have reduced out-of-pocket health expenditure, increased insurance coverage to 92%, increased primary health care service coverage in urban slums, built capacities for quality assessment and improvement, there remain gaps that will be addressed through strengthening primary health care, enhancing public–private partnerships, establishing a functional referral system and improving service delivery through adoption of a family practice approach.

Things to do: sightseeing and shopping



Ornate Royal Golestan
Palace



Azadi Tower



Carpet Museum of Iran



Sadabaad Palace



National Museum of Iran



Tehran Grand Bazar



Milad Tower



Nature Bridge

Date and Venue

The Sixty-sixth session of the Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean is scheduled to take place in Parsian Azadi Hotel,

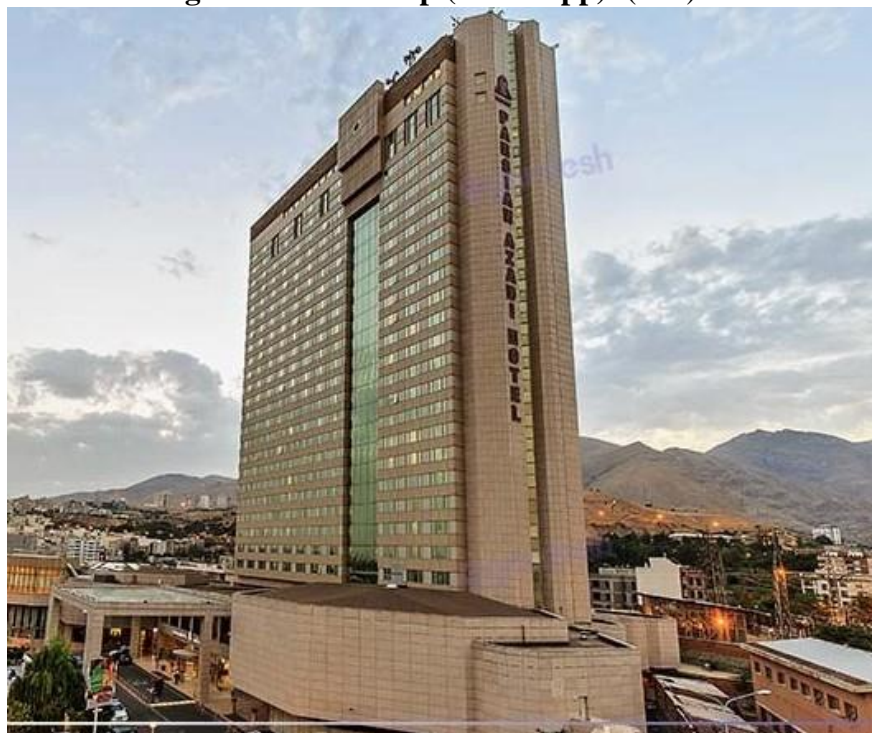
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, from Monday 14 to Thursday 17 October 2019, inclusive.

Address: Intersection of Yadegar-e-Emam and Chamran Highways, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Tel: (+98) 21 888 24 381

Fax: (+98) 21 860 44 397

Hotel booking coordinator help (Whatsapp): (+98) 912 203 99 25



Registration for Participation

All participants are kindly requested to register for the Sixty-sixth session of the Regional Committee through the following link: <https://reg.unog.ch/event/28205/>, no later than 15 August 2019. The WHO secretariat will confirm acceptance of your registration via e-mail.

Membership and attendance

The Regional Committee consists of Representatives, one from each country or territory of WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region. The Representatives may be accompanied by alternates and advisers (Rule 1 of the Rules of Procedure).

The WHO Regional Director, in consultation with the Regional Committee, may invite States, not Members of the Committee, to participate without vote in the sessions of the Regional Committee. The Regional Director, in consultation with the Regional Committee, may also invite nongovernmental organizations to participate in the deliberations of the Committee (Rule 2 of the Rules of Procedure).

Credentials

Member States shall communicate to the Regional Director, all alternates and advisers, including the name and designation of their Representatives, **no later than 4 September 2019** (40 days before the date fixed for the opening of the session of the Committee). Such credentials will be issued by the Head of State, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Health or any other appropriate authority (Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure). Similarly organizations and States invited to be represented at the session shall communicate the names of the persons by whom they will be represented.

Working languages

The working languages of the Committee are Arabic, English and French. Statements made in any of these languages will be interpreted simultaneously into the other two languages. Persian (Farsi) interpretation will also be available for inaugural session.

Agenda and other documents

Official documentation of the session will be available in Arabic, English and French on the Regional Committee website: <http://www.emro.who.int/about-who/rc66/index.html> as of September 2019. Documents will not be dispatched by post. Furthermore, as RC66 is the first paperless Regional Committee, participants are kindly requested to consult the documents online, as no hard copies will be provided.

Eco-friendly meeting

Organizers are committed to ensuring that this session of the Regional Committee will be more environmentally friendly than previous sessions through its paperless initiative. It will also seek to encourage people's

participation in physical activity initiatives and ensuring healthier food options are available to delegates.

Submissions by delegations

Delegations wishing to propose draft resolutions for circulation to the Regional Committee are requested to share them with the Secretariat **at least two days before** the proposal is discussed, to allow time for translation, reproduction in the working languages and circulation to delegations.

Travel arrangements

Delegates/participants are kindly requested to make their own travel arrangements for both outward and return journeys. Travellers are strongly encouraged to have their return flights confirmed before departing for the Islamic Republic of Iran, as onward reservations and deviations may be difficult to obtain at short notice. The Secretariat will provide assistance with travel arrangements during the session, if needed.

Arrival in Tehran

Upon arrival at the Tehran Imam Khomeini International Airport, transport to the hotel will be arranged provided that participants have shared their travel details on their registration form.

A meeting point will be established at the arrival hall, equipped with WHO and Regional Committee signage.

Commute time by car from the airport to the hotel is around 50 minutes subject to the time of arrival and traffic congestion.

Entry visa to Iran

All participants are kindly requested to fill in the visa application form (attached Word file) no later than 15 August 2019 and send it to the following address for visa assistance: RC66visa@behdasht.gov.ir (cc'ing: rc66iran@who.int) attaching a digital passport photo (size 4cm*6cm) and a scanned copy of their passport (in JPEG format and of acceptable quality). Applicants will be informed of their visa status via return e-mail.

Accommodation

The official hotel for the event is Parsian Azadi Hotel. It is strongly recommended that all attendees reside in the proposed hotel.

Participants are kindly requested to make their own room reservation online, by visiting the hotel website at www.parsianhotel66.com no later

than 31 August 2019. Representatives and other participants are responsible for settling their own hotel bills directly with the hotel.

The accommodation of heads of delegations will be arranged and covered by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education.

Online booking can be made using credit cards, noting the below cancellation policy:

Up to 48 hours before the date of arrival, the reservation will be free cancellation and the entire amount will be refunded.

Up to 24 hours before the day of arrival, one night fee will be charged and the rest will be refunded.

Less than 24 hours before the arrival, the reservation will be considered as non-refundable and the entire payment will be charged.

Any extras must be settled directly with the hotel noting that credit cards are not accepted in Islamic Republic of Iran and payment must be made in cash (US dollars or Euros).

Transportation

Transportation will be provided upon arrival and departure, and for any official event held outside the hotel, noting that transportation will only be made available to and from the official venue of the Regional Committee, namely the Parsian Azadi hotel.

Banking facilities

Due to variable exchange rates in the country, you can find the latest rates on the hotel's website: <http://www.azadihotel.com> Foreign currency can be exchanged at the hotel or at a money exchange outside the hotel.

Climate

In October the weather is expected to be pleasant during the day and cool in the evening. Temperatures during this time of the year range between 14°C and 23°C.

Dress Code

The hijab, or head scarf, should be worn and women are kindly requested to wear loose fitting and long sleeved clothing.