

Scaling up the response to HIV/AIDS

The Fifty-fourth World Health Assembly,

Taking into consideration the report on HIV/AIDS;¹

Recognizing that AIDS is a crisis of unprecedented proportions that threatens development, social cohesion, political stability, life expectancy and places a devastating burden on many countries and regions;

Recalling that the Constitution of the World Health Organization states that enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition, and considering that progressive realization of that right in the context of HIV/AIDS, should involve access, on a non-discriminatory basis to health facilities, prevention, care, treatment and support;

Considering that stigmatization, silence, discrimination and denial aggravate the impact of the pandemic;

Acknowledging that all countries must continue to emphasize widespread and effective prevention, including education, nutrition, information and services, as well as access to, among other products, vaccines, condoms, microbicides and drugs;

Recognizing that prevention and care are inextricably linked, and that their effectiveness is increased when they are used together;

Considering that HIV/AIDS affects women and children with special severity;

Recognizing that inexpensive and effective drugs to prevent and treat opportunistic infections exist, are urgently needed, and can be made rapidly available;

Acknowledging that the lack of affordable pharmaceuticals and of feasible supply structures and health systems continues to hinder an effective response to HIV/AIDS in many countries and especially for the poorest people;

¹ Document A54/15.

Recognizing that, where it has been available, antiretroviral therapy has reduced mortality and prolonged healthy lives, that recent reductions in prices create a new opportunity to extend this benefit to those that would otherwise not be able to afford them;

Noting the critical role that health services and systems must play in delivering or scaling up delivery of these responses, and that the health systems in many developing countries are already overstretched by the existing burden of diseases and particularly by the added impact of HIV/AIDS;

Recognizing that in order to implement a comprehensive and multisectoral approach to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases will require adequate human and financial resources at national and international levels;

Taking into account the need to implement measures that incorporate HIV/AIDS prevention, care and awareness interventions in humanitarian assistance programmes to ensure that populations affected by conflict, and natural and human disasters – refugees, internally displaced persons and, in particular, women and children – are protected from and treated appropriately for HIV and related infections;

Recalling efforts to make drugs available at lower prices for those in need;

Welcoming the work in progress to develop a global AIDS and health fund;

Bearing in mind various regional initiatives, including the Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases, of the African Heads of State and Government, which recognizes that those epidemics should be tackled as an integral part of the agenda for promoting poverty reduction and sustainable development and the Declaration of Quebec City of the Heads of State and Governments of the Americas, which emphasizes that good health and equal access to medical attention, health services and affordable medical drugs are vital for human development and for achievement of political, economic and social objectives;

Noting resolutions 2001/33 and 2001/51 adopted by the Commission on Human Rights at its 57th session;

Recognizing the role of UNAIDS in leading the global response to HIV/AIDS and its support to national AIDS programmes, the leadership of the United Nations Secretary-General, particularly in the context of the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on HIV/AIDS (June 2001);

Recognizing also the key role that WHO plays in health promotion, prevention of disease, care and treatment, organization of services, dissemination of information to support the formulation of health policies, and the improvement of access to affordable drugs and commodities;

1. URGES Member States:

(1) to ensure that HIV/AIDS is one of the highest priorities on the health and development agenda and to allocate sufficient resources for the response to HIV/AIDS;

(2) to take effective measures, within a supportive environment, to ensure that people everywhere, particularly young people, know how to avoid infection, and to facilitate access to services and methods of prevention which should be the mainstay of programmes;

- (3) to scale up their responses to HIV/AIDS, with particular emphasis on building up partnerships across sectors, strengthening health care systems, nutritional programmes, education and information programmes and developing prevention, treatment and care interventions that involve people living with HIV/AIDS;
- (4) to recognize and act on the need for a society-wide response to reduce stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS;
- (5) to make every effort to provide, progressively and in a sustainable manner, the highest standard of treatment for HIV/AIDS, including the prophylaxis and treatment of opportunistic infections, and effective use of quality-controlled antiretroviral therapy in a careful and monitored manner to improve adherence and effectiveness and reduce the risk of development of resistance;
- (6) to strive to include participation of people living with HIV/AIDS in the formulation of national policies on HIV/AIDS;
- (7) while taking into account differences of health care systems, to develop appropriate modalities of care such as outpatient services, home-based care, day care in the context of a true continuum of care, so as to ensure sustainable and high-quality diagnosis, counselling, testing, care, treatment and support;
- (8) to support, encourage and provide incentives for increased investment in research related to HIV/AIDS, including social and behavioural research, and in the development of new preventive and therapeutic approaches and technologies, including in particular HIV/AIDS vaccines and microbicides;
- (9) to make every effort to provide financial support and technical cooperation to enable Member States to expand their response to the pandemic;
- (10) in order to increase access to medicines, to cooperate constructively in strengthening pharmaceutical policies and practices, including those applicable to generic drugs and intellectual property regimes, in order further to promote innovation and the development of domestic industries consistent with international law;
- (11) to support the establishment of a global HIV/AIDS and health fund;

2. URGES the Director-General:

- (1) to provide Member States and other health and development partners with high-quality, normative, health-related guidance and sustained and comprehensive technical support that will enable countries to intensify their national responses to HIV/AIDS in line with their particular circumstances and priorities;
- (2) to assist in the development and implementation of integrated and comprehensive prevention and care strategies;
- (3) to expand with urgency support for the development of necessary health system capacities and structures, and to provide normative guidance and technical cooperation in order

to enhance prevention, clinical management, nursing care, counselling, and social and psychological support to people living with HIV/AIDS;

(4) to foster research, including ethical, controlled, clinical trials, on HIV vaccines, microbicides, and new antiretroviral therapies, and on necessary commodities such as testing kits;

(5) to give guidance and support the building of national capacity for surveillance of adverse drug reactions and emergence of resistance in connection with antiretroviral medicines;

(6) to maintain close collaboration with the international community and the private sector with the aim of improving the availability of medicines for HIV/AIDS, including antiretroviral therapy;

(7) to take an active part, together with other international actors, in the development and establishment of a global HIV/AIDS and health fund, including promoting mechanisms for a transparent and participatory governance structure including representation of civil society.

Eighth plenary meeting, 21 May 2001
A54/VR/8

= = =