

WHO's role and responsibilities in health research

The Executive Board,

Having considered the draft of the WHO strategy on research for health,¹

RECOMMENDS to the Sixty-second World Health Assembly the adoption of the following resolution:

The Sixty-second World Health Assembly,

Recalling resolution WHA58.34 on the Ministerial Summit on Health Research and resolution WHA60.15 on WHO's role and responsibilities in health research;

Recognizing the contribution of research to the development of solutions to health problems and the advancement of health worldwide;

Aware that, in a rapidly changing world facing significant environmental, demographic, social and economic challenges, research will be increasingly essential for clarifying the nature and scope of health problems, and for identifying effective life-saving interventions and strategies;

Realizing the increasingly multidisciplinary and intersectoral nature of research for health improvement;

Affirming the roles and responsibilities of WHO, as the leading global health organization, in health research;

Recognizing the need to strengthen the capacity of the public sector in health research;

Acknowledging that research activities in the private and public sectors can be mutually supportive and complementary in improving health globally;

Conscious of the need to strengthen the conduct, management and coordination of WHO's activities in health research;

¹ Document EB124/12.

Cognizant of the need to better communicate WHO's research activities and results, especially to its Member States and partners;

Noting the references to research for health in resolution WHA61.21 on the Global strategy and plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property and relevant conclusions and recommendations of the WHO Commission on Social Determinants for Health;

Taking into account the outcomes of the Global Ministerial Forum on Research for Health (Bamako, 17–19 November 2008),

1. ENDORSES the WHO strategy on research for health annexed hereto;
2. URGES Member States:
 - (1) to recognize the importance of research for improving health and health equity and to adopt and implement policies for research for health that are aligned with national health plans, that include the participation of all relevant sectors, public and private, that align external support around mutual priorities, and that strengthen key national institutions;
 - (2) to consider drawing on the strategy on research for health according to their own national circumstances and contexts, and as part of their overall policies on health and health research;
 - (3) to strengthen national health research systems by improving leadership and management of research for health, by focusing on national needs, by establishing effective institutional mechanisms for research, by using evidence in health policy development, and by harmonizing and coordinating national and external support (including that of WHO);
 - (4) to establish, as necessary and appropriate, governance mechanisms for research for health, to ensure rigorous application of good research norms and standards, including protection for human subjects involved in research, and to promote an open dialogue between policy-makers and researchers on national health needs, capacities and constraints;
 - (5) to improve the collection of reliable health information and data and to maximize, where appropriate, their free and unrestricted availability in the public domain;
 - (6) to promote intersectoral collaboration and high-quality research in order to produce the evidence necessary for ensuring that policies adopted in all sectors contribute to improving health and health equity;
 - (7) to initiate or strengthen intercountry collaboration with the aim of obtaining efficiencies of scale in research through the sharing of experiences, best practices and resources, the pooling of training and procurement mechanisms, and the use of common, standardized evaluation methods for research;

- (8) to consider, where appropriate, establishment of regional collaborating mechanisms, such as centres of excellence, in order to facilitate access by Member States to the necessary research and expertise to meet health challenges;
- (9) to continue to pursue financing of research for health as articulated in resolution WHA58.34;
3. INVITES Member States, the health research community, international organizations, supporters of research, the private sector, civil society and other concerned stakeholders:
- (1) to provide support to the Secretariat in implementing the research for health strategy and in monitoring and evaluating its effectiveness;
- (2) to collaborate with the Secretariat, within the framework of the strategy, in identifying priorities for research for health, in developing guidelines relating to research for health and in the collection of health information and data;
- (3) to assist the Secretariat and WHO's research partners in mobilizing enhanced resources for the identified global priorities for research for health;
- (4) to pay particular attention to the research needs of low-income countries, notably in areas such as technology transfer, research workforce, and infrastructure development and the determinants of health particularly where this will contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, health equity and better health for all and to collaborate with WHO Member States and the Secretariat to better align and coordinate the global health research architecture and its governance through the rationalization of existing global health research partnerships, to improve coherence and impact, and to increase efficiencies and equity;
- (5) to support, where appropriate, technical cooperation among developing countries in research for health;
4. REQUESTS the Director-General:
- (1) to provide leadership in identifying global priorities for research for health;
- (2) to implement the strategy within the Organization at all levels and with partners, and in line with the references to research for health in the Global strategy and plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property;
- (3) to improve the quality of research within the Organization;
- (4) to provide adequate core resources in proposed programme budgets for the implementation of the research for health strategy;
- (5) to ensure that the highest norms and standards of good research are upheld within WHO, including technical, ethical and methodological aspects and the translation into practice, use and dissemination of results and to review and align the architecture and governance of the Organization's research activities and partnerships;

(6) to provide support to Member States, upon request and as resources permit, in taking relevant actions to strengthen national health research systems and intersectoral collaborations;

(7) to strengthen the role of WHO collaborating centres as a well-established, effective mechanism for cooperation between the Organization and countries in the field of research for health;

(8) to report to the Sixty-fifth World Health Assembly on the implementation of this resolution, through the Executive Board, in 2012.

Twelfth meeting, 26 January 2009
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