

Traditional Medicine

The Executive Board,

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

The Sixty-second World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on primary health care, including health system strengthening;¹

Recalling resolutions WHA22.54, WHA29.72, WHA30.49, WHA31.33, WHA40.33, WHA41.19, WHA42.43, WHA54.11, WHA56.31 and WHA61.21;

Recalling the Declaration of Alma-Ata which states, inter alia, that “The people have the right and duty to participate individually and collectively in the planning and implementation of their health care”, and “Primary health care relies, at local and referral levels, on health workers, including physicians, nurses, midwives, auxiliaries and community workers as applicable, as well as traditional practitioners as needed, suitably trained socially and technically to work as a health team and to respond to the expressed health needs of the community”;

Noting that the term “traditional medicine” covers a wide variety of therapies and practices, which may vary greatly from country to country and from region to region;

Recognizing traditional medicine as one of the resources of primary health-care services that could contribute to improved health outcomes, including those in the Millennium Development Goals;

Recognizing that Member States have different domestic legislation, approaches, regulatory responsibilities and delivery models related to primary health care;

Noting the progress that many governments have made to include traditional medicine into their national health systems;

¹ Document EB124/8.

Noting that progress in the field of traditional medicine has been achieved by a number of Member States through implementation of the WHO traditional medicine strategy 2002–2005;¹

Expressing the need for action and cooperation by the international community, governments, and health professionals and workers, to ensure proper use of traditional medicine as an important component contributing to the health of all people, in accordance with national capacity, priorities and relevant legislation;

Noting that the WHO Congress on Traditional Medicine took place from 7 to 9 November 2008, in Beijing, China, and adopted the Beijing Declaration on Traditional Medicine;

Noting that African Traditional Medicine Day is commemorated annually on 31 August in order to raise awareness and the profile of traditional medicine in the African region, as well as to promote its integration into national health systems,

1. URGES Member States, in accordance with national capacities, priorities, relevant legislation and circumstances:

(1) to consider adopting and implementing the Beijing Declaration on Traditional Medicine in accordance with national capacities, priorities, relevant legislation and circumstances;

(2) to respect, preserve and widely communicate, as appropriate, the knowledge of traditional medicine, treatments and practices, appropriately based on the circumstances in each country, and on evidence of safety, efficacy and quality;

(3) to formulate national policies, regulations and standards, as part of comprehensive national health systems, to promote appropriate, safe and effective use of traditional medicine;

(4) to consider, where appropriate, including traditional medicine into their national health systems based on national capacities, priorities, relevant legislation and circumstances, and on evidence of safety, efficacy and quality;

(5) to further develop traditional medicine based on research and innovation giving due consideration to the specific actions related to traditional medicine in the implementation of the Global strategy and plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property;

(6) to consider, where appropriate, establishing systems for the qualification, accreditation or licensing of traditional medicine practitioners and to assist traditional medicine practitioners to upgrade their knowledge and skill in collaboration with relevant health providers;

(7) to consider strengthening communication between conventional and traditional medicine providers and, where appropriate, establishing appropriate training programmes for health professionals, medical students and relevant researchers;

¹ Document WHO/EDM/TRM/2002.

(8) to cooperate with each other to share knowledge and practices of traditional medicine and exchange training programmes on traditional medicine, consistent with national legislation and relevant international obligations,

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to support Member States, as appropriate and upon request, in implementing the Beijing Declaration on Traditional Medicine;

(2) to update the WHO traditional medicine strategy 2002–2005, based on countries' progress and current new challenges in the field of traditional medicine;

(3) to give due consideration to the specific actions related to traditional medicine in the implementation of the Global strategy and plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property;

(4) to continue providing policy guidance to countries on how to integrate traditional medicine into health systems, especially to promote, where appropriate, the use of traditional/indigenous medicine for primary health care, in line with evidence of safety, efficacy and quality;

(5) to continue providing technical guidance to support countries to ensure the safety, efficacy and quality of traditional medicine;

(6) to strengthen cooperation with WHO collaborating centres, research institutions and nongovernmental organizations to share evidence-based information and to support training programmes for national capacity building in the field of traditional medicine.

Eleventh meeting, 26 January 2009
EB124/SR/11

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