

WHA57.11 Family and health in the context of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family

The Fifty-seventh World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on family health in the context of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family;¹

Recalling that the Constitution of the World Health Organization states that the 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;

Recognizing and promoting the equal rights of men and women and emphasizing that equality between women and men and respect for the rights of all family members are essential to family well-being and to society at large;

Recalling also the commitments, goals, and outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits that address health issues related to family members, individuals, and communities;

Recalling further that relevant United Nations instruments on human rights and relevant global plans and programmes of action call for the widest possible protection and assistance to be accorded to the family, bearing in mind that, in different cultural, political and social systems, various forms of the family exist;

Also recognizing that parents, families, legal guardians and other caregivers have the primary role and responsibility for the well-being of children, and must be supported in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities; and that in all actions related to children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration;

Further recognizing that cultural norms, socioeconomic conditions, gender equality and education are significant determinants of health;

Acknowledging that strong and supportive families and social networks have a positive impact on the health of all family members, whereas inadequate access to health care, child abuse, neglect, and violence in all its forms, especially spousal and domestic violence, alcohol and substance abuse, neglect of older persons and persons with disabilities and the potential effects of prolonged periods of separation, such as those resulting from migration, are a significant concern;

Noting with concern the devastating effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on families, family members, individuals and communities, especially in families headed by children and older persons;

Noting that the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family is being observed in 2004,

1. URGES Member States:

- (1) to assess government policies with a view to assisting families to provide a supportive environment for all their members;

¹ Document A57/12.

(2) to ensure the availability of appropriate legal, social and physical infrastructures to support mothers and fathers, families, legal guardians and other caregivers, particularly older women and men, to strengthen their capability to provide care, nurturing and protection in the best interest of every child in their care, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child;

(3) to take measures to ensure that gender-sensitive health policies, plans and programmes recognize and address the rights and comprehensive health and development needs of each family member, with special attention to families at risk of being unable to meet the basic needs of their members, such as those families in which child abuse, violence in general, domestic violence or neglect, including members with disability and older persons, occur;

(4) to develop, use, and maintain systems to provide data, disaggregated by sex, age and other determinants of health, to underpin the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of evidence-based health interventions relevant to all family members;

(5) to develop or strengthen alliances and partnerships with all relevant governmental and nongovernmental partners to assist families to meet the health and development needs of all their members;

(6) to strengthen national actions to ensure sufficient resources to fulfil the international commitments, goals and outcomes of relevant United Nations conferences and summits related to the health of family members;

(7) to fulfil their obligations under international instruments relevant to family and health development, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as specified in resolution WHA46.27 on the International Year of the Family;

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to raise awareness of health issues relevant to families, family members, individuals and the community and to support Member States in increasing their efforts to strengthen health policies on these issues;

(2) to support Member States, upon request, in developing, using, and maintaining systems to provide data, disaggregated by sex, age and other determinants of health, that underpin the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of evidence-based health interventions relevant to families and their members;

(3) to support Member States in their efforts to establish or strengthen programmes on parenting through relevant research and international forums for sharing country experiences;

(4) to support Member States in their efforts to fulfil their commitments to the goals and outcomes of relevant United Nations conferences and summits related to the health of family members, in collaboration with relevant partners;

(5) to pay due attention to the care and support issues related to the health of family members, including men and the elderly, in relevant policies and programmes of the Organization, and to ensure that initiatives focusing on family and health take into account the role of schools in educating children, especially girls;

(6) to work closely with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and other relevant organizations of the United Nations system, such as UNICEF and UNFPA, on issues related to families and their members by sharing experiences and findings;

(7) to report to the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly, through the Executive Board, on progress made in implementing this resolution.

(Eighth plenary meeting, 22 May 2004 –
Committee A, second report)