

SEVENTY-SIXTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

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STATEMENT BY PORTUGAL UNDER AGENDA ITEMS 16.1 and 16.3

Well-being and health promotion and social determinants of health

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is high time we emphasize the crucial role of well-being and health promotion in our society. The field of health promotion recognizes that our health is influenced not only by individual choices but also by a range of social, economic, and environmental determinants of health. Understanding and addressing these determinants is essential for creating a healthier and more equitable society.

First and foremost, it is vital to acknowledge that social determinants of health play a significant role in shaping our well-being. Factors such as income, education, employment, and access to healthcare are key contributors to health outcomes. For example, individuals with lower incomes often face barriers in accessing quality healthcare services, leading to poorer health outcomes compared to their more affluent counterparts. By addressing these social determinants, we can create a foundation for better health and well-being for all.

One of the most significant social determinants of health is education. A person's level of education is closely linked to their health status. Education equips individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to make informed decisions about their health. It also enhances health literacy, which is crucial in enabling individuals to understand health information and take proactive measures to improve their well-being. Portugal has recognized the importance of health literacy and has invested in promoting health and well-being as a strategic and cross-cutting area of health.

Another critical determinant of health is culture. Cultural beliefs, values, and practices influence health behaviours and outcomes. By understanding different cultural perspectives, we can develop tailored health promotion strategies that resonate with diverse populations. Behavioural and cultural insights are crucial in promoting health and in encouraging the adoption of health-promoting behaviours. Portugal has embraced this approach, recognizing the significance of behavioural and cultural insights in its health promotion initiatives.

Our commitment to health promotion and the recognition of social determinants has been evident in our work on various health issues. As an example, we have developed policies and strategic plans to combat tobacco use, a significant public health concern. These initiatives involve comprehensive tobacco control measures, including public awareness campaigns, smoking cessation programs, and tobacco taxation policies. This proactive approach demonstrates Portugal's commitment to tackling health challenges head-on and creating a healthier nation.

Furthermore, Portugal's focus on health promotion extends beyond individual interventions to creating health-promoting ecosystems. This involves creating supportive environments that enable individuals to make healthy choices easily. By considering the social determinants of health, informing policy and initiatives through behavioural and cultural insights, and promoting health literacy, Portugal is helping pave the way for a healthier and more prosperous society.

Thank you.

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