

EM/RC49/R.7 HEALTH UNDER DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES: THE IMPACT OF WAR, DISASTERS AND SANCTIONS ON THE HEALTH OF POPULATIONS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION ¹

The Regional Committee,

Bearing in mind that the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is a fundamental human right enshrined in the WHO constitution;

Reaffirming that human survival and health are the cross-cutting objectives and the measures of success of all humanitarian endeavours;

Expressing grave concern at the deterioration of the health status of a number of vulnerable populations living in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, as a result of exposure to protracted social conflict and violence, imposition of sanctions and frequent natural disasters, affecting overall livelihood and human security;

Condemning denial of access to health workers and humanitarian assistance attempting to reach the needy in situations of conflict;

Recognizing that the regional vulnerability to natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, landslides and drought, over the past decade, and exacerbated poverty levels in countries in conflict, have adversely affected the health of populations;

Commending the Regional Director for his continuous efforts to implement and expand key public health programmes throughout countries in situations of complex emergency;

1. **URGES** Member States to:
 - 1.1 Build up national capacity for emergency preparedness and disaster reduction/mitigation and response, in order to reduce avoidable mortality and disability;
 - 1.2 Base policy and advocacy activities on the WHO core commitments in emergencies, in order to promote health as the leading concern in emergencies.
 - 1.3 Implement interventions and activities based on credible operational research, taking into account lessons learned from previous emergencies;
2. **REQUESTS** the Regional Director to continue to provide the necessary technical assistance to support and expand public health programmes for vulnerable populations living in emergency situations;
3. **REQUESTS** the Director-General to allocate extrabudgetary resources to meet the urgent health needs of these vulnerable populations.