Progress reports on selected Regional Committee resolutions

The High-Level Preparatory Meeting for the Seventy-fourth Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia, held virtually on 19–21 July 2021, reviewed the progress reports on the following selected Regional Committee resolutions:

1. Measles and rubella elimination by 2023 (SEA/RC72/R3);
2. Challenges in polio eradication (SEA/RC60/R8);
3. Delhi Declaration on improving access to essential medical products in the Region and beyond (SEA/RC71/R2);
4. Covering every birth and death: improving civil registration and vital statistics (SEA/RC67/R2);
5. (a) South-East Asia Regional Health Emergency Fund (SEA/RC60/R7); and (b) Expanding the scope of the South-East Asia Regional Health Emergency Fund (SEARHEF) (SEA/RC69/R6);
6. Patient safety contributing to sustainable universal health coverage (SEA/RC68/R4);
7. Delhi Declaration on Emergency Preparedness in the South-East Asia Region (SEA/RC72/R1); and
8. Colombo Declaration on strengthening health systems to accelerate delivery of NCD services at the primary health care level (SEA/RC69/R1)

The recommendations made by the High-Level Preparatory Meeting on each of these progress reports are submitted to the Seventy-fourth Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia for its consideration.
Introduction

1. The High-Level Preparatory Meeting held virtually on 19–21 July 2021 reviewed the progress reports on the following selected Regional Committee resolutions:

   i. Measles and rubella elimination by 2023 (SEA/RC72/R3);
   ii. Challenges in polio eradication (SEA/RC60/R8);
   iii. Delhi Declaration on improving access to essential medical products in the Region and beyond (SEA/RC71/R2);
   iv. Covering every birth and death: improving civil registration and vital statistics (SEA/RC67/R2);
   v. (a) South-East Asia Regional Health Emergency Fund (SEA/RC60/R7); and (b) Expanding the scope of the South-East Asia Regional Health Emergency Fund (SEARHEF) (SEA/RC69/R6);
   vi. Patient safety contributing to sustainable universal health coverage (SEA/RC68/R4);
   vii. Delhi Declaration on Emergency Preparedness in the South-East Asia Region (SEA/RC72/R1); and
   viii. Colombo Declaration on strengthening health systems to accelerate delivery of NCD services at the primary health care level (SEA/RC69/R1)

2. The recommendations made by the High-Level Preparatory Meeting on each of these progress reports are submitted to the Seventy-fourth Session of the WHO Regional Committee for its consideration.

1. **Measles and rubella elimination by 2023 (SEA/RC72/R3)**

   **Recommendations**

   **Actions by Member States**

   (1) Continue to demonstrate political and programmatic commitment that is translated into action to accelerate progress towards measles and rubella elimination by 2023.

   (2) Ensure that the post-COVID-19 pandemic mitigation phase sees an acceleration in progress towards measles and rubella elimination by:

   - developing and refining strategic, operational and policy guidelines for reviving immunization and surveillance activities;
   - targeted implementation of local-specific strategies to plug the gaps in immunization and surveillance that have emerged following the ongoing pandemic.

   **Actions by WHO**

   (1) Continue to provide high-level technical support to accelerate the implementation of the Strategic Plan as well as support for mobilization of the required resources to optimally implement the national plans on measles and rubella elimination by 2023, including support for implementation of activities to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on the drive for measles and rubella elimination.
2. Challenges in polio eradication (SEA/RC60/R8)

Recommendations

Actions by Member States

(1) Continue with their commitment to sustain high routine immunization coverage, and maintain a sensitive surveillance system and a strong outbreak response capacity as well as containment of polioviruses in facilities.

(2) Ensure long-term sustainability of polio infrastructure through domestic/alternative funding resources to maintain the gains over polio and to achieve other public health goals.

Actions by WHO

(1) Provide technical support to Member States in the implementation of the Polio Eradication Strategy 2022–2026.

(2) Provide technical support for polio risk assessments and outbreak preparedness and response to countries of the Region.

(3) Continue to perform oversight for the implementation of polio transition plans in Member States affected by the rampdown in polio funding.

3. Delhi Declaration on improving access to essential medical products in the Region and beyond (SEA/RC71/R2)

Recommendations

Actions by Member States

(1) Allocate more resources, improve efficiency, and support fair pricing and policy implementation to reduce out-of-pocket expenditure.

(2) Ensure an evidence-based selection of essential medical products and an improvement in the degree and scope of rational use of medicines.

(3) Strengthen public procurement of medical products through robust procurement institutions, quality assurance including for storage and transport, and IT-supported real-time supply chain management systems.

(4) Strengthen good governance on medicines by improving transparency on the management of conflicts of interest, ensuring that selection criteria by committee and their decision-making processes are publicly available.

(5) Build resilient supply chains, and ensure supply security by reducing dependency, increasing domestic production, diversifying supply base, and financing and securing sufficient safety stockpiles.
**Actions by WHO**

1. Intensify support to Member States to improve accessibility, availability, acceptability and affordability of essential medical products of assured quality to attain universal health coverage and the health-related Sustainable Development Goal targets.

4. **Covering every birth and death: improving civil registration and vital statistics (SEA/RC67/R2)**

**Recommendations**

**Actions by Member States**

1. Accelerate implementation of the SEA Regional CRVS Strategy 2015–2024, designed to guide and support the improvement of CRVS systems in the Region, which remain pertinent today, particularly the strong focus on strengthening the role of the health sector to improve CRVS systems.

2. Adopt and implement country-specific strategies characterized by a high degree of intersectoral and cross-programme collaboration, with a focus on review and revisions of CRVS business processes, establishing data exchange and information-sharing, and promoting interoperability and standardization of data collection protocols.

3. Enhance institutional capacity to compile, analyse, disseminate and use reliable cause of death (CoD) data to improve policies and actions as well as better monitoring of the mortality-related SDG indicators and targets.

**Actions by WHO**

1. Support the implementation of the global WHO CRVS Strategic Implementation Plan 2021–2025. Also, expand the regional CRVS initiative in support of Member States priorities and requests for technical assistance to strengthen the performance of CRVS systems and capacity development that is necessary to improve the quality, analysis and use of mortality statistics.

2. Support knowledge exchange and learning across Member States from country experiences with the use of CRVS strengthening models, methods, tools and techniques.

5. (a) South-East Asia Regional Health Emergency Fund (SEARHEF) (SEA/RC60/R7); and
(b) Expanding the scope of the South-East Asia Regional Health Emergency Fund (SEARHEF) (SEA/RC69/R6)

Recommendations

*Actions by Member States*

1. Improve timely, consistent and complete reporting of the utilization and impact of SEARHEF for emergency preparedness and response.

2. Support the further strengthening of SEARHEF as an efficient and effective regional mechanism for national emergency preparedness and response through increased voluntary contributions.

*Actions by WHO*

1. Establish, through the SEARHEF Working Group, a standardized mechanism, including templates, to assess the effectiveness of the utilization and impact of SEARHEF for more robust monitoring and evaluation.

2. Advocate and enhance multisectoral collaboration to explore opportunities and develop synergies across different financing efforts to mobilize resources for pandemic/emergency preparedness and response.

3. Continue to coordinate the efficient and effective operations of the South-East Asia Regional Health Emergency Fund in its functional capacity of the Fund’s Secretariat.

6. Patient safety contributing to sustainable universal health coverage (SEA/RC68/R4)

Recommendations

*Actions by Member States*

1. Member States will endeavour to scale up the implementation of the Regional Strategy for Patient Safety in the WHO South-East Asia Region (2016–2025) and the Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021–2030 in the context of their priorities and needs.

2. Member States will choose the necessary indicators and monitoring tools appropriate in their context to report progress on the implementation of the Global Patient Safety Action Plan to the Seventy-sixth World Health Assembly in 2023 as mandated by Decision WHA74(13) of the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly.

*Actions by WHO*

1. Continue extending technical support to Member States to fulfil needs regarding the development or review and implementation of country-specific, evidence-based patient safety action plans for sustainable and robust patient safety systems.
(2) Foster global/regional patient safety networks to facilitate intercountry and intracountry learning.

(3) The Director-General will report on progress in the implementation of the Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021–2030 to the Seventy-sixth World Health Assembly in 2023 and thereafter every two years until 2031 in accordance with the terms of World Health Assembly Decision WHA74(13).

7. Delhi Declaration on Emergency Preparedness in the South-East Asia Region (SEA/RC72/R1)

Recommendations

Actions by Member States

(1) Synthesize and share the key lessons identified from the COVID-19 pandemic response through intra-action reviews and country consultations in order to improve the ongoing pandemic response and planning to further strengthen health security systems.

(2) Contribute in developing a regional roadmap to accelerate the implementation of the Delhi Declaration for health emergency preparedness, taking into consideration lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic response and recommendations from global committees and panels.

(3) Continue to advance core capacities mandated by the International Health Regulations (IHR, 2005) and linked to resilient health systems, while ensuring functional multisectoral arrangement, through developing, updating and implementing national action plans for health security.

Actions by WHO

(1) Support Member States to synthesize and share key lessons learnt from their COVID-19 pandemic response, and facilitate identification of common priorities to improve the ongoing pandemic response, and to inform development of the future regional health security framework.

(2) Facilitate the development of a regional roadmap to accelerate the implementation of the Delhi Declaration for health emergency preparedness, building upon lessons learnt from the COVID-19 response and recommendations from other global committees and panels.

(3) Update the Working Paper for the Regional Committee to include outcomes of the virtual meeting of the Bi-regional Technical Advisory Group for the Asia-Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases and Public Health Emergencies (APSED III) and planning for the universal health and preparedness review pilot, and facilitate Member States of the Region to take an active role in relevant global and regional initiatives in South-East Asia.
8. **Colombo Declaration on strengthening health systems to accelerate delivery of NCD services at the primary health care level (SEA/RC69/R1)**

**Recommendations**

*Actions by Member States*

1. Develop the policy and programmatic actions to strengthen and sustain the integration of NCD services at the PHC level within the agenda of universal health coverage and primary health care.

2. Take steps to ensure access of people to essential NCD services as a part of the COVID-19 pandemic response and to “build back better and stronger”.

3. Develop and expand people-centred primary health care-based chronic care models with a special focus on the needs of the vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations.

4. Strengthen the operational levers of primary health care by prioritizing the making of an NCD-ready workforce at the PHC level; ensuring essential medicines and diagnostics; expanding NCD registries; and strengthening actions to improve NCD financing and financial protection for people living with NCDs.

*Actions by WHO*

1. Provide guidelines on ensuring essential NCDs services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Develop an inventory of the digital innovations introduced in the Region during the pandemic response and make these accessible to Member countries.

3. Provide support to Member States for evidence-based policy generation, advocacy, capacity-building, systems strengthening, partnerships and knowledge management to improve NCD services at the primary health care level.