SCHOOL HEALTH

The Regional Committee,

Affirming that the health of children and adolescents is of fundamental importance – for the health of this group today, as well as for building the foundations of healthy adulthood – and that promoting and protecting child and adolescent health necessitates a special focus on health in schools;

Affirming also that investing in child and adolescent health is essential to achieving the strategic vision articulated in For the Future: Towards the Healthiest and Safest Region;

Deeply concerned that children and adolescents face many significant risks to their current and future health, including obesity, undernutrition, mental health conditions (which can be exacerbated by social media), unsafe environments, violence and injuries, tobacco use, alcohol and other substance abuse issues;

Concerned also about the impact of prolonged COVID-19 school closures on educational outcomes, as well as children and adolescents' physical and mental health;

Recognizing that investing in health through schools offers a strategic opportunity to address these risks using innovative and forward-looking approaches in which schools are “incubators” for health that entrench the knowledge, attitudes, values and skills children and adolescents need to adopt healthy lifelong behaviours;
Acknowledging that health and education are inextricably linked, and that both are critical for building human capital and sustainable development;

Building on the existing body of work on school health – including global tools and recently released guidance documents on health promoting schools from WHO and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – which highlights the vital role schools play in the health and well-being of students, families and their broader communities,

1. **ENDORSES** the *Regional Framework on Nurturing Resilient and Healthy Future Generations in the Western Pacific*;

2. **URGES** Member States:

   (1) to use the Regional Framework as a guide to develop or update national strategies, policies or plans, according to their local situation, capacity and resources, including in educational settings beyond schools, as appropriate;

   (2) to foster high-level political commitment and intersectoral collaboration among government agencies – particularly health and education ministries, as well as those responsible for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) – and multistakeholder collaboration, including with civil society organizations, in support of coordinated approaches at national and subnational levels;

   (3) to ensure adequate technical and financial resources are available for the implementation of national strategies, policies or plans to promote schools as “incubators” for health;
3. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

(1) to provide technical support for Member States to develop or update and implement gender- and age-responsive national strategies, policies and plans in line with the Regional Framework;

(2) to facilitate dialogue and the exchange of knowledge, experiences, lessons and innovations among Member States;

(3) to report periodically on progress in the implementation of the *Regional Framework on Nurturing Resilient and Healthy Future Generations in the Western Pacific*.

Fourth meeting, 28 October 2021