The Thirty-first World Health Assembly,

Recalling resolutions WHA28.66 and EB61.R17;

Having considered the progress report of the Director-General on drug policies and management;

Realizing that large segments of the world's population do not have access to the most essential drugs and vaccines that are indispensable to ensure effective health care;

Recognizing the importance of an adequate supply of essential drugs and vaccines to meet the real health needs of the people, through the implementation of national programmes of health care;

Deeply concerned by the high proportion of health budgets spent on pharmaceuticals by governments, particularly of developing countries, thereby limiting the remaining funds available for the provision of adequate health care to the whole population;

Stressing the need to provide essential drugs of adequate quality, in sufficient quantity and at reasonable cost to meet the health needs of these countries;

Considering that local production of essential drugs and vaccines is a legitimate aspiration which developing countries have expressed on many occasions, and that considerable progress has been achieved in some countries;

Considering that the establishment of a pharmaceutical industry in countries where it does not exist requires transfer of appropriate technology and investment, and that most developing countries cannot afford this without international cooperation;

Recognizing the importance of objective information about pharmaceuticals and the risk of uncontrolled promotional activity by manufacturers, particularly in developing countries;

Convinced that collective purchases of large quantities of pharmaceuticals would substantially reduce their costs;

Convinced that urgent international action is required to alleviate this situation through the establishment of an action programme of technical cooperation on essential drugs aimed at strengthening the national capabilities of developing countries in the field of selection and proper use of essential drugs to meet their real needs, and in local production and quality control, wherever feasible, of such drugs;

Highly appreciating the steps already taken by the Director-General to make available essential drugs and vaccines necessary for the extension of the health care coverage of the population;

1. **ENDORSES** resolution EB61.R17;

2. **URGES** Member States, particularly developing countries, to:

   (1) establish adequate drug procurement, storage and distribution systems in order to make available drugs of adequate quality, at reasonable prices, to the population;
2) Establish national drug lists or formularies by international nonproprietary (generic) names, including essential drugs selected on the basis of the health needs of countries and taking into account the criteria of the WHO Expert Committee on the Selection of Essential Drugs (Technical Report Series No. 615);

3) Enact legislation as appropriate covering drug registration, use or prescription by generic names, control of drug information, including therapeutic indications and mention of side-effects, price regulation and definition of the types of drugs authorized for use or prescription by different levels of health workers;

4) Collaborate in the exchange of information on drug policies and management through bilateral or multilateral programmes and WHO;

3. REQUESTS the Director-General:

1) To continue to identify the drugs and vaccines which, in the light of scientific knowledge, are indispensable for primary health care and control of diseases prevalent in the population, and to update periodically this aspect of the report of the WHO Expert Committee on the Selection of Essential Drugs;

2) To cooperate with Member States in formulating drug policies and management programmes that are relevant to the health needs of populations and are aimed at ensuring access of the whole population to essential drugs at a cost the country can afford;

3) To improve existing WHO supply services for drugs, including vaccines, and medical equipment, through closer collaboration with the United Nations Children’s Fund, and to ensure that developing countries take full advantage of such services;

4) To ensure collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and regional development banks and funds, the United Nations Children’s Fund and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization with a view to ensuring that technical expertise and financing are made available to interested countries for establishing, wherever feasible, local production corresponding to their health needs, it being understood that financing should be independent of the source of technology;

5) To develop further the dialogue with pharmaceutical industries in order to assure their collaboration in meeting the health needs of large underserved segments of the world’s population;

6) To study how prices of pharmaceutical products are determined and possible strategies for reducing such prices, including the development of a code of marketing practices, with special emphasis on pharmaceutical products essential for the populations of developing countries;

7) To take appropriate steps to cooperate with Member States in developing quality control systems for drugs, whether imported or locally produced, and to establish regional quality control networks;

8) To foster exchange of information among Member States on drug policies and management and on technical aspects of pharmaceutical products;

9) To submit to the sixty-third session of the Executive Board a comprehensive action programme as outlined above, aimed at fostering technical cooperation among developing countries, and to stimulate bilateral and multilateral cooperation in this programme;

10) To invite the participation of governments directly interested in implementing this action programme in their own countries, governments willing to provide support, relevant United Nations agencies, and other appropriate cooperating parties;

11) To submit a report on the progress achieved in the implementation of this action programme to subsequent sessions of the Executive Board and Health Assembly.