

Report of the regional committee discussions by the Director-General

1. The Health Assembly in resolution WHA65.22 requested regional committees to discuss at their 2012 meetings the report of the Consultative Expert Working Group on Research and Development: Financing and Coordination,¹ in the context of the implementation of the global strategy and plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property in order to contribute to concrete proposals and actions.²
2. The Director-General has the honour to present a summarized report of the discussion by the Regional Committee for Africa and its programme subcommittee (PSC) following its meeting held 19–23 November 2012 (see Annex).

¹ Document A65/24, Annex.

² See document A/CEWG/2 for the summary of the regional committee meetings and other relevant regional processes held in September and October 2012.

ANNEX

Summary of the Programme Subcommittee (PSC) discussions on the proceedings of the national and regional consultations on the report of the Consultative Expert Working Group (CEWG) on Research and Development: Financing and Coordination

1. In line with Resolution WHA65.22, the Director-General was requested to hold an open-ended Member States meeting to thoroughly analyse the “Report of the Consultative Expert Working Group (CEWG) on Research and Development: Financing and Coordination” and the feasibility of implementing the proposed recommendations. After the initial review of the CEWG Report by the first meeting of the PSC (9–13 July 2012), the Regional Director communicated to all Member States to conduct national consultations which would inform a regional consultation, whose recommendations would be examined by the PSC.
2. During the PSC, it was reported that only eight countries had submitted the reports of their national consultative meetings. The regional consultative meeting took place on 4–5 October 2012 and discussed a shortlist of 9 out of a total of 16 recommendations that were noted as being most relevant to the African Region. They further selected five recommendations that were feasible in the context of the African Region. The recommendations considered feasible include open approaches to Research and Development (R&D) through competitive research platforms and milestones; funding mechanisms through specific taxes; pooling resources for R&D in disease areas; strengthening R&D capacity and technology transfer; and coordination of research through putting in place a global Research and Development observatory.
3. They unanimously recognized the importance of research for countries in the Region. They emphasized the need to reinforce country human resource capacities for research, to allocate adequate financial resources for research activities and to urgently establish functional mechanisms to coordinate research development including ethics. The role of WHO in supporting countries in their efforts for research development was highlighted.
4. The PSC emphasized that the subject is a developmental issue and could further be addressed through regional integration initiatives. It was further indicated that important issues like the protection of intellectual property rights; financing of research in line with the implementation of the Algiers Declaration and the support towards research career development needed to be considered.
5. The PSC also agreed with the recommendations made by the regional consultative meeting including those considered feasible in the African Region. The PSC made the following additional recommendations for consideration by the 62nd Regional Committee:
 - (a) Countries should speed up the process of implementing the global strategy and plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property.
 - (b) All countries were encouraged to participate in the open-ended meeting of Member States that will analyse the report and feasibility of the recommendations proposed by the CEWG to be held from 26 to 28 November 2012 at the Executive Board Room at WHO headquarters in Geneva.
 - (c) Countries that had not conducted and submitted reports for their national consultations were encouraged to do so.

(d) The PSC recommended that the ways and means for implementing the recommendations of the CEWG be further elaborated in order to provide a clear way forward.

(e) The PSC also noted that engaging in the dialogue around the adoption of an international treaty would require a more comprehensive analysis of the CEWG recommendations and countries should also consider other feasible mechanisms.

Summary of the discussion by the Regional Committee¹

Follow-up of the report of the Consultative Expert Working Group on Research and Development: Financing and Coordination (Document AFR/RC62/14)

6. The Regional Committee discussed the report in light of the results of the national consultations and the regional consultation organized at the Regional Office under the following three headings: research coordination, financing and monitoring of research and development expenditures.

7. Delegates expressed concern about the feasibility of a legally binding treaty for research and development financing. This may lead to lengthy consultations which could delay the implementation of the recommendations of the CEWG report.

8. The following recommendations were made to Member States:

(a) To start implementing some of the other recommendations contained in the CEWG report such as research coordination, national financing for research and the monitoring of research and development expenditures;

(b) To speed up implementation of the actions contained in the global strategy and plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property (GSPA-PHI) prepared by the Intergovernmental Working Group;

(c) To consider requesting the Regional Economic Groupings to discuss the recommendations made by the CEWG and assist Member States in implementing them;

(d) To strengthen their capacity for research and development in medicines regulation, ethics, and technology transfer including the strengthening of pharmaceutical production facilities in countries within the context of the GSPA-PHI;

(e) To include resources in the national budget to fund research and development including funding for licensing of products by national pharmaceutical companies and to contribute to a pharmacopeia for Africa in line with the Algiers Declaration;

(f) To strengthen national regulatory capacity for medicines, vaccines, biologicals, foods and devices along the lines of the African Medicines Agency.²

¹ See the report of the Sixty-second session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa document AFR/RC62/21 pages 35–37.

² See <http://www.afro.who.int/en/rdo/speeches/3731-sixty-second-session-of-the-who-regional-committee-for-africa.html>.

9. The following recommendations were made to WHO and other partners:
- (a) To identify actions in the CEWG report needing immediate implementation and assist Member States in this exercise;
 - (b) To support timely implementation of the actions proposed in the global strategy and plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property;
 - (c) To assist countries in strengthening national regulatory capacities.
10. The Regional Committee adopted without amendment document AFR/RC62/14: Follow-up of the report of the Consultative Expert Working Group on Research and Development: Financing and Coordination.

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