

Health conditions of, and assistance to, the Arab population in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine

The Fifty-third World Health Assembly,

Mindful of the basic principle established in the WHO Constitution, which affirms that the health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security;

Recalling the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East (Madrid, 30 October 1991), on the basis of the United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), as well as on the basis of the principle of “land for peace”, and the subsequent agreements between the Palestinian and Israeli sides, the latest of which is the Sharm-El Sheikh agreement;

Expressing the hope that the peace talks between the parties concerned in the Middle East will lead to a just and comprehensive peace in the area, securing, in particular, the Palestinian right to self-determination including the option of a State;

Noting the signing in Washington, D.C. on 13 September 1993 of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the commencement of the implementation of the Declaration of Principles following the signing of the Cairo Accord on 4 May 1994, the interim agreement signed in Washington, D.C. on 28 September 1995, the transfer of health services to the Palestinian Authority, and the launching of the final stage of negotiations between Israel and the PLO on 5 May 1996;

Emphasizing the urgent need to implement the Declaration of Principles and the subsequent Accords;

Expressing grave concern about the Israeli settlement policies in the Palestinian occupied territory, including occupied East Jerusalem, in violation of international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and of relevant United Nations resolutions;

Stressing the need to preserve the territorial integrity of all the occupied Palestinian territory and to guarantee the freedom of movement of persons and goods within the Palestinian territory, including the removal of restrictions of movement into and from East Jerusalem, and the freedom of movement to and from the outside world having in mind the adverse consequences of the recurrent closure of the Palestinian territory on its socioeconomic development, including the health sector;

Recognizing the need for increased support and health assistance to the Palestinian population in the areas under the responsibility of the Palestinian Authority and to the Arab populations in the occupied Arab territories, including the Palestinians as well as the Syrian Arab population;

Recognizing that the Palestinian people will have to make strenuous efforts to improve their health infrastructure, and taking note of the initiation of cooperation between the Israeli Ministry of Health and the Palestinian Ministry of Health which emphasizes that health development is best enhanced under conditions of peace and stability;

Reaffirming the right of the Palestinian patients and the medical staff to be able to benefit from the health facilities available in the Palestinian health institutions in occupied East Jerusalem;

Recognizing the need for support and health assistance to the Arab populations in the areas under the responsibility of the Palestinian Authority and in the occupied territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan;

Having considered the report of the Director-General,

1. EXPRESSES the hope that the peace talks will lead to the establishment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East;
2. CALLS UPON Israel not to hamper the Palestinian Ministry of Health in carrying out their full responsibility for the Palestinian people, including in occupied East Jerusalem, and to lift the partial and complete closures imposed on the Palestinian territory;
3. AFFIRMS the need to support the efforts of the Palestinian Authority in the field of health in order to enable it to develop its own health system so as to meet the needs of the Palestinian people in administering their own affairs and supervising their own health services;
4. URGES Member States, intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations and regional organizations to provide speedy and generous assistance in the achievement of health development for the Palestinian people;
5. THANKS the Director-General for her report and efforts, and requests her:
 - (a) to take urgent steps in cooperation with Member States to support the Palestinian Ministry of Health in its efforts to overcome the current difficulties, and in particular so as to guarantee free circulation of those responsible for health, of patients, of health workers and of emergency services, and the normal provision of medical goods to the Palestinian medical premises, including those in Jerusalem;
 - (b) to continue to provide the necessary technical assistance to support health programmes and projects for the Palestinian people;
 - (c) to take the necessary steps and make the contacts needed to obtain funding from various sources including extrabudgetary sources, to meet the urgent health needs of the Palestinian people;

(d) to continue her efforts to implement the special health assistance programme and adapt it to the health needs of the Palestinian people, taking into account the health plan of the Palestinian people;

(e) to report on implementation of this resolution to the Fifty-fourth World Health Assembly;

6. EXPRESSES gratitude to all Member States, intergovernmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations and calls upon them to provide the assistance needed to meet the health needs of the Palestinian people.

Eighth plenary meeting, 20 May 2000
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