

Contribution of WHO to the follow-up of the United Nations General Assembly special session on HIV/AIDS

The Fifty-fifth World Health Assembly,

Deeply concerned that the global HIV/AIDS pandemic, through its devastating scale and impact, constitutes a global emergency and one of the most formidable challenges both to human life and dignity and to the effective enjoyment of human rights, and undermines social and economic development throughout the world which affects all levels of society: national, community, family and individual;

Noting with profound concern that HIV continues to spread unabated around the world and that in many countries, in particular in Eastern Europe and Asia, infection rates have risen dramatically during 2001, so that by the end of 2001, 40 million people worldwide were living with HIV/AIDS, 90% of them in developing countries, and 75% in Africa;

Recalling and reaffirming the previous commitments on HIV/AIDS made through the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS adopted at the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on HIV/AIDS (27 June 2001), the United Nations Millennium Declaration (8 September 2000), and the United Nations Secretary-General's road map towards its implementation¹ as well as resolution WHA54.10 on scaling up the response to HIV/AIDS;

Acknowledging WHO's special role within the United Nations system to combat and mitigate the effects of HIV/AIDS, and its responsibility in the follow-up of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and as a cosponsor of UNAIDS;

Recognizing the essential role of the health sector in the response to HIV/AIDS and the need to strengthen health systems and make them more effective so that countries and communities may contribute maximally to the fulfilment of the global targets set out in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS;

Recognizing that the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all is an essential element in a global response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic that includes prevention, care,

¹ General Assembly document A/56/326.

support and treatment, reducing vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, and preventing stigmatization and related discrimination against people living with, or at risk of, HIV/AIDS;

Commending the efforts of the Director-General to enhance and strengthen WHO's response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and further to develop and extend the role of WHO as a key cosponsor of UNAIDS,

1. URGES Member States:

- (1) to act upon the political commitment expressed at the United Nations General Assembly special session on HIV/AIDS, by operationalizing the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and by allocating significantly increased resources to the health sector so that it may play an effective role in prevention, care, support and treatment of HIV/AIDS;
- (2) to foster mechanisms to increase global resources for the response to HIV/AIDS;
- (3) to establish and strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems, including epidemiological and behavioural surveillance and assessment of the response of health systems to the epidemics of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections, to enhance programming of interventions by learning from success and failure and to optimize the allocation of resources;
- (4) to establish or expand counselling services and voluntary, confidential HIV-testing in order to encourage health-seeking behaviour and to act as an entry point for prevention and care;
- (5) to increase access to care, including by making prophylactic and therapeutic drugs affordable according to the availability of resources and assuring that they are safely and effectively used in the proper context of existing systems;
- (6) to build and strengthen partnerships between health-care providers, both public and private, and communities, including nongovernmental organizations, in order to mobilize and empower communities in the response to HIV/AIDS;
- (7) to scale up significantly programmes to increase coverage of interventions intended to reduce the spread of HIV and increase the quality and length of life of those living with HIV/AIDS, on the basis of scientific evidence and lessons learned;
- (8) to advocate the reduction of stigmatization and discrimination against people living with or at risk of HIV/AIDS and to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on vulnerable groups, especially women and children;

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

- (1) to continue to ensure that WHO plays a key role in providing technical leadership, direction and support to the health system's response to HIV, within the United Nations system-wide response, as a cosponsor of UNAIDS;
- (2) to provide support to countries in order to maximize opportunities for the delivery of all relevant interventions for prevention, care, support and treatment of HIV/AIDS;

- (3) to provide support to countries in order to strengthen the health sector so that it may play a more effective and catalytic role in relation to other relevant sectors with a view to achieving a well-coordinated, multisectoral and sustainable response to the epidemic;
- (4) within the framework of strengthening the health system's response to HIV/AIDS, to provide support to countries, as part of their national strategies, in the areas of prevention, care, support and treatment in order to meet the commitments and goals agreed at the United Nations General Assembly special session on HIV/AIDS, in particular as they:
 - (a) take effective measures, within a supportive environment, to ensure that people everywhere, particularly young people, have access to the information and services necessary to enable them to protect themselves from HIV;
 - (b) intensify and expand action to achieve the goal of the special session of lowering the proportion of infants infected with HIV through reduction of HIV transmission in women of reproductive age, access to family-planning information and services for HIV-infected women, and provision of interventions that reduce transmission from mother to child;
 - (c) develop national strategies and actions on care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS, including prevention and treatment of opportunistic infections and provision of palliative care and psychosocial support;
- (5) to continue broad-based consultations with countries and partners on the global health-sector strategy, which will comprise tools and approaches for scaling up effective, feasible and sustainable interventions;
- (6) to provide support for research on new technologies and approaches to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS, such as vaccines, microbicides, standard and simplified regimens for antiretroviral treatment and monitoring, and for operational research on service delivery;
- (7) to submit a report on WHO's work on HIV/AIDS, including the global health-sector strategy to the Executive Board at its 111th session and the Fifty-sixth World Health Assembly.

Ninth plenary meeting, 18 May 2002
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