

WHA58.34 Ministerial Summit on Health Research

The Fifty-eighth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the Mexico Statement on Health Research resulting from the Ministerial Summit on Health Research convened by the Director-General of WHO and the Government of Mexico (Mexico City, 16-20 November 2004) and the report of the Secretariat;¹

Acknowledging that high-quality research, and the generation and application of knowledge are critical for achieving the internationally agreed health-related development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, improving the performance of health systems, advancing human development, and attaining equity in health;

Recognizing the need to strengthen evidence-based evaluation of the consequences of health and other policies and practices impacting on health at national, regional, and local levels;

Reaffirming the need to create demand for research and to foster participation in the research process;

Sensitive to the need to strengthen national health-research systems by building relevant capacity, developing capable leadership, providing essential monitoring and evaluation tools, improving capacity for ethical review of research, and determining necessary ethical standards and regulations for population health, health care, and clinical research;

Committed to promoting access to reliable, relevant, and up-to-date evidence on the effects of interventions, based on systematic review of the totality of available research findings, and taking into account existing models;

Conscious of the need to identify relatively underfunded areas of research, such as health systems and public health, where increased resources and leadership would accelerate the achievement of internationally agreed health-related development goals;

Emphasizing that research is a global endeavour based on the sharing of knowledge and information and conducted according to appropriate national ethical guidelines and standards,

1. ACKNOWLEDGES the Mexico Statement on Health Research resulting from the Ministerial Summit on Health Research (Mexico City, 16-20 November 2004);

¹ Document A58/22.

2. URGES Member States:

(1) to consider implementing the recommendation made by the Commission on Health Research for Development in 1990 that “developing countries should invest at least 2% of national health expenditures in research and research capacity strengthening, and at least 5% of project and program aid for the health sector from development aid agencies should be earmarked for research and research capacity strengthening”;¹

(2) to establish and implement or strengthen a national health-research policy with appropriate political support and to allocate adequate funding and human resources for health-systems research;

(3) to encourage collaboration with other partners in health research so as to facilitate the conduct of such research within their health systems;

(4) to promote activities to strengthen national health-research systems, including improvement of the knowledge base for making decisions, setting priorities, managing research, monitoring performance, and adopting standards and regulations for high-quality research and its ethical oversight, and ensure participation in such activities of the community, nongovernmental organizations, and patients;

(5) to establish or strengthen mechanisms to transfer knowledge in support of evidence-based public health and health-care delivery systems, and evidence-based health-related policies;

(6) to support, together with WHO and the global scientific community, networking of national research agencies and other stakeholders with a view to conducting collaborative research in order to address global health priorities;

(7) to encourage public debate on the ethical dimension and societal implications of health research among researchers, practitioners, patients and representatives of civil society and the private sector and to encourage transparency on research results and on possible conflicts of interest;

3. CALLS UPON the global scientific community, international partners, the private sector, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate:

(1) to provide support for a substantive and sustainable programme of health-systems research aligned with priority country needs and aimed at achieving the internationally agreed health-related development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

(2) to establish a voluntary platform to link clinical trials registers in order to ensure a single point of access and the unambiguous identification of trials with a view to enhancing access to information by patients, families, patient groups and others;

(3) to strengthen or establish the transfer of knowledge in order to communicate, improve access to, and promote use of, reliable, relevant, unbiased, and timely health information;

¹ *Commission on Health Research for Development. Health research: essential link to equity in development.* New York, Oxford University Press, 1990.

(4) to provide support for national, regional, and global research partnerships, including public-private partnerships, to accelerate the development of essential medicines, vaccines, and diagnostics, and mechanisms for their equitable delivery;

(5) to recognize the need to involve the relevant authorities in the Member States concerned in the initial planning of health-research projects;

(6) to support, together with Member States and the WHO Secretariat, networking of national research agencies and other stakeholders to the greatest extent possible as a means of identifying and conducting collaborative research that would address global health priorities;

4. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to undertake an assessment of WHO's internal resources, expertise and activities in the area of health research, with a view to developing a position paper on WHO's role and responsibilities in the area of health research, and to report through the Executive Board to the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly;

(2) to engage in consultation with interested stakeholders on creation of a programme on health-systems research geared to providing support to Member States to accelerate achievement of internationally agreed health-related development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

(3) to pursue with interested partners the development of a voluntary platform to link clinical trials registers;

(4) to assist in the development of more effective mechanisms to bridge the divide between ways in which knowledge is generated and ways in which it is used, including the transformation of health-research findings into policy and practice;

(5) to consider the possibility, with other interested stakeholders, of convening an international conference on research into human resources for health, and to consider convening the next ministerial-level meeting on health research in 2008;

(6) to ensure that meetings open to all Member States on health research organized by WHO that are characterized as summits or as ministerial summits are first approved by the Health Assembly.

(Ninth plenary meeting, 25 May 2005 –
Committee A, eighth report)