

TITLE: Seventy-first Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia, New Delhi, India, 3-7 September 2018

SUBTITLE: A Summary Report by the Chairperson, H.E. Mr Jagat Prakash Nadda, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India

PART 1: TOPICS FOR GLOBAL DISCUSSION

- **Draft WHO global strategy on health, environment and climate change:** The committee noted the summary report of the Regional Consultation on the Draft Global Strategy on Health, Environment and Climate Change held in New Delhi in August 2018 and agreed with the proposed actions therein. The decision SEA/RC71(1)¹ on Draft Global Strategy on Health, Environment and Climate Change was adopted by the Committee. Through this decision, the Regional Director was requested to submit the above summary report to the Director-General, as required by Executive Board Decision 142(5). She was also requested to develop a draft regional plan of action for the WHO Global Strategy on Health, Environment and Climate Change, in consultation with Member States and in line with the country and regional context, and gaps, for submission to the Seventy-second session of the Regional Committee for South-East Asia in 2019.
- **Development of the road map on access to medicines and vaccines:** The Committee noted the progress made in the development of the draft roadmap. It was informed that the WHO Regional office in collaboration with WHO Headquarters will facilitate wide dissemination of the draft roadmap to key focal points in all SEA Region Member States so that regional inputs feed into the global consultation process that will finalize the roadmap document to be submitted at the 144th Session of the Executive Board by November 2018. The Committee acknowledged the collaborative efforts on access to medicines and welcomed the adoption of the Delhi Declaration on Improving accessibility of Medical Products in the Region and Beyond.
- **Development of a draft global action plan on the health of refugees and migrants:** The Committee was informed that as per Decision EB140(9) and World Health Assembly resolution WHA70.15 on Promoting the Health of Refugees and Migrants, it was requested that a draft Global Action Plan be prepared on promoting the health of refugees and migrants and submitted to Seventy-second World Health Assembly in May 2019 through the 144th Session of the Executive Board in January 2019. In accordance with this, a draft Global Action Plan has been prepared by WHO headquarters and comments on this draft are being sought from Member States and partners through web consultation process. The weblink was shared with Geneva-based missions in August 2018 with a deadline for submission of comments to WHO by 15 September 2018.
- **Proposed Programme Budget 2020-2021:** Having considered the high-level Proposed Programme Budget 2020-21, the Committee adopted the Resolution

¹ <http://www.searo.who.int/mediacentre/events/governance/rc/70/rc71-decisions.pdf?ua=1>

SEA/RC71/R3² noting that the total base budget allocation for the Region has increased by US\$ 104.7 million, of which about one third is aimed at increasing in-country capacity and data and innovation, while the other two thirds are for the transition of polio functions. The Committee noted that the overall proposed Budget envelope in the Base Budget for SEA Region was US\$ 393.5 million. It commended the proposed shifts in the high-level Programme Budget to regions and countries and requested the Director-General to take into account the disease burden and population size of the Region in the development of the full Programme Budget 2020-2021 and future budgets. The Committee urged that measurement of GPW13 indicators be aligned with the SDGs and existing frameworks to avoid additional data burden.

- **Review of the Draft Provisional Agenda of the 144th Session of the WHO Executive Board**: The Committee noted the Draft Provisional Agenda of the 144th Session of the WHO Executive Board. It expressed the need to take concrete actions for effective participation by Member States in the UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage to be convened in September 2019. The decision SEA/RC71 (2) was adopted by the Committee to endorse the proposal by Member States for an item on “Preparation for the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on Universal Health Coverage” for inclusion in the Provisional Agenda of the 144th Session of WHO Executive Board and requested Member States to support Thailand in submitting a proposal with a concept note on behalf of the South-East Asia Region in a timely manner for the consideration of the Officers of the Executive Board.

PART 2: TOPICS OF REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

- **Ministerial Roundtable**: The resolution SEA/RC71/R2³ endorsed the Delhi Declaration on Improving Access to Essential Medical Products in the Region and Beyond. It urged the Member States to implement the Delhi Declaration and requested the Regional Director to harmonize the progress report on implementation of this Declaration in line with the decision SEA/RC70(1) on Annual progress monitoring of UHC and health-related Sustainable Development Goals. The WHO publication entitled “*WHO South-East Asia Journal of Public Health (Volume 7, Issue 2) – Accelerating access to essential medicines in the WHO South-East Asia Region: opportunities for greater engagement and better evidence*”⁴ was launched.
- **Programme Budget Performance Assessment - 2016-2017**: The Committee noted with appreciation the revamped format of the WHO *Results Report 2016–2017*, which provides a summary of the Organization’s key programmatic achievements during the biennium alongside the associated financial highlights. The Committee also observed that the working paper clearly demonstrates the linkage between regional achievements, financial investment and WHO support. The Committee appreciated the practice of advance planning and thereby availability of funding in time before the biennium workplan commences.

² <http://www.searo.who.int/mediacentre/events/governance/rc/70/sea-rc71-r3.pdf?ua=1>

³ <http://www.searo.who.int/mediacentre/events/governance/rc/70/sea-rc71-r2.pdf?ua=1>

⁴ <http://www.searo.who.int/publications/journals/seaiph/en/>

- **Programme Budget 2018-2019 - Implementation:** Information on technical and financial implementation status of the Programme Budget 2018-19 for the first semester of the biennium was provided to the Committee. It acknowledged the Secretariat's efforts towards focused technical and financial monitoring, and commended the steady progress in the Regional Director's eight Flagship Programmes. The Committee was also pleased to note that the SEA Region had the highest implementation rate among all regions, and that nearly all Top Tasks were on track. The Committee appreciated the move towards the WHO investment case observing value-for-money and transparency principles for strengthening partnerships aimed at transformative public health actions.
- **Evaluation:** The Committee was informed of the various initiatives related to evaluation conducted by the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia. The Committee noted the funding challenges for evaluations in the Region and recommended that the focus be on internal checklists and processes for concurrent evaluation and course correction, given the high cost associated with evaluations. It was proposed that evaluations could be part of country office budget allocations.
- **Malaria: From declaration to action, and intensifying dengue vector control:** The WHO SEA Region has the second-highest malaria burden globally. It has achieved all the targets for malaria set under the MDGs and is also the first Region to have two of its Member States certified as malaria-free: Maldives and Sri Lanka. Three other Member States namely Bhutan, Nepal and Timor-Leste have been identified as having the potential to eliminate malaria by 2020. The WHO SEA Region is among the highest-burden regions for dengue with five countries (India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand) among the 30 most highly endemic countries in the world. Resolution SEA/RC71/R4⁵ on intensifying activities towards control of Dengue and elimination of malaria in the South-East Asia Region was adopted by the Committee. The WHO publication entitled "An Urgent Front: Cross-border Collaboration to Secure a Malaria-free South-East Asia Region-Development of an Operational Framework⁶" was launched.
- **The Decade for Health Workforce Strengthening in the SEA Region 2015-2024 - Second review of progress, challenges, capacities and opportunities:** The Committee recognized the need for continued efforts in this area which included improving rural retention and transformative education, improving collection and analysis of data on HRH with a focus on frontline health workers and improving HRH governance. The WHO publication entitled "Decade for health workforce strengthening in the South-East Asia Region 2015-2024: Second review of progress, 2018⁷" was launched.
- **Regional progress in survival of newborns, children and mothers: Moving towards Global Strategy targets:** The Committee noted the tremendous progress made in this area and called for increased attention to improving the quality of care

⁵ <http://www.searo.who.int/mediacentre/events/governance/rc/70/sea-rc71-r4.pdf?ua=1>

⁶ <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/274309/9789290226659-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

⁷ <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/274310/9789290226574-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

services and to the rapid and equitable expansion of their coverage and the need to strengthen the delivery of the continuum of reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH) services, in particular. In addition, the importance of using an integrated approach for RMNCAH services within the UHC framework and of the close monitoring of progress towards achieving the 2030 targets of Global Strategy and SDGs was highlighted. Two WHO publications entitled “Improving Newborn and Child Health – A Strategic Framework (2018-2022)”⁸ and “Strategic Guidance on Accelerating Actions for Adolescent Health in South-East Asia Region (2018-2022)”⁹ were launched.

- **Strengthening SEA Region EMTs for health emergency response**: The Committee noted that a regional consultation for EMT strengthening was organized by the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia in June 2018 in New Delhi. It also noted the actions proposed to strengthen EMTs in the SEA Region. The Resolution SEA/RC71/R5¹⁰ was adopted by the Committee which called for reporting on progress, achievements, challenges and solutions in implementing the resolution to the Seventy-third and Seventy-fifth Sessions of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia. The WHO publication entitled “Building for Change - Good Practices in Health Emergencies in the South-East Asia”¹¹ was launched.
- **Annual report on monitoring progress in UHC and health-related SDGs** : The Seventieth session of the Regional Committee for South-East Asia requested the Regional Director to “include an annual report on monitoring progress on UHC and health-related SDGs as a substantive Agenda item until 2030” (Decision SEA/RC70 (1)¹²). The Committee noted that the progress on UHC in the annual report for 2018 was measured using the two agreed SDG indicators for UHC: essential health service coverage and financial protection. The Committee appreciated WHO tools and indicators, and requested WHO to continue to assist with monitoring and using trend data, and building national capacity for UHC and the SDGs. The WHO publication entitled “Monitoring progress on universal health coverage and the health-related Sustainable Development Goals in the South-East Region – 2018 update”¹³ was launched.
- **Covering every birth and death: Improving civil registration and vital statistics**: The Committee noted the progress made this important area and recognized the difficulties in obtaining accurate cause of death data in different contexts. The Committee requested WHO to provide technical support in improving institutional capacity in compiling better-quality cause-of-death data; training on analysis and use of vital statistics; and strengthening regulations and policies for data-sharing between the offices of the health, civil registrar and statistics departments.

⁸ <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/274311/9789290226505-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

⁹ <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/274312/9789290226475-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

¹⁰ <http://www.searo.who.int/mediacentre/events/governance/rc/70/sea-rc71-r5.pdf?ua=1>

¹¹ <https://indd.adobe.com/view/60b85ce4-7afc-4b95-9d37-808dc93d48a9>

¹² <http://www.searo.who.int/mediacentre/events/governance/rc/70/rc70-decisions.pdf?ua=1>

¹³ <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/274313/9789290226628-eng.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>

- **Promoting physical activity in the South-East Asia Region**: The Committee noted the challenges to promoting physical activity – namely increasing urbanization, motorization and the growth of sedentary lifestyles – and unanimously welcomed the Global Action Plan for Physical Activity (GAPPA) and the new voluntary target of 15% reduction of insufficient physical activity by 2030 that was adopted by the Seventy-first World Health Assembly. It urged WHO to provide further support to countries including on implementing GAPPA. The WHO publication entitled “Status report on ‘Physical Activity and Health in the South-East Asia Region’¹⁴” was launched.
- **Nomination of the Regional Director**: The Resolution SEA/RC71/R1¹⁵ was adopted by the Committee on the Nomination of the Regional Director nominating Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh as the Regional Director for the South-East Asia Region and requesting the Director-General to propose to the Executive Board the re-appointment of Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh from 1 February 2019.
- **Time and place of future Sessions of the Regional Committee**: The decision SEA/RC71 (3) was adopted by the Committee on this agenda.

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¹⁴ <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/274308/9789290226697-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

¹⁵ <http://www.searo.who.int/mediacentre/events/governance/rc/70/sea-rc71-r1.pdf?ua=1>