

AFR/RC43/R7: Epidemiological surveillance of communicable diseases at the district level

The Regional Committee,

Considering that the frequent occurrence in the African Region of epidemics such as cholera, plague, yellow fever, cerebrospinal meningitis, malaria and many others brings untold human suffering and loss of human lives;

Considering epidemiological surveillance as a powerful management tool for predicting the occurrence of epidemics, enabling the prior mobilization of resources and for prevention and control of potential epidemics;

Bearing in mind that Member States consider the district as the anchor for strengthening health systems through a decentralized management approach;

Having considered the Regional Director's report on the epidemiological surveillance of communicable diseases at district level;

Having also considered the report of the Regional Director on "Extending the role of nursing/midwifery personnel in the epidemiological surveillance of diseases";

1. CONGRATULATES the Regional Director for his reports;
2. APPROVES the proposed steps for strengthening epidemiological surveillance at various levels of the national health system, including the organization of training activities at district level;
3. DECLARES the next five years a period for preventing the occurrence of and combating epidemics of communicable diseases in Member States through improved epidemiological surveillance at district level;
4. URGES Member States:
 - (i) to review current epidemiological surveillance activities at district level, identify weaknesses and take the necessary steps for improvement;
 - (iii) to ensure participation of nurses/midwives and other health care personnel in epidemiological surveillance of communicable diseases for improved disease control;
 - (iv) to prepare specific guidelines for use by staff at the periphery, for surveillance and prevention of potentially epidemic diseases of local importance;
 - (v) to reinforce training in epidemiology for district health teams, notably using WHO modules;
 - (vi) to develop well-staffed and properly equipped laboratory services;
5. REQUESTS the Regional Director:
 - (i) to provide technical and financial support for short- and long-term training programmes in epidemiological surveillance;

- (ii) to monitor progress in training activities for epidemiological surveillance in Member States using WHO country teams;
- (iii) to disseminate information on epidemics of communicable diseases in the Region and continue to support countries in combating them;
- (iv) to report to the forty-sixth session of the Regional Committee on progress made in implementation of this resolution.

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