Accelerating progress towards achievement of Millennium Development Goal 4 to reduce child mortality: prevention and treatment of pneumonia

The Executive Board,

RECOMMENDS to the Sixty-third World Health Assembly the adoption of the following resolution:

The Sixty-third World Health Assembly,

Aware of the joint WHO/UNICEF report on a global action plan for the prevention and control of pneumonia, presented in November 2009;¹

Noting the first advance market commitment on the pneumococcal vaccine and the progress made so far in integrating the *Haemophilus influenzae* type b vaccine into routine immunization programmes;

Noting also the introduction of the pneumococcal Accelerated Development and Introduction Plans;

Recalling that resolution WHA58.15 on Global Immunization Strategy requested the Director-General to mobilize resources to promote the availability and affordability in countries of future new vaccines based on evidence of epidemiological profiles;

Concerned at the lack of substantial progress towards reducing morbidity and mortality from pneumonia, despite it being globally the leading cause of mortality of children under the age of five years;

Mindful that decreasing the global burden of pneumonia will be essential for reaching Target 4.A of Millennium Development Goal 4;

Noting that safe and highly effective tools are available for pneumonia control in the form of WHO’s Integrated Management of Childhood Illness approach for case management at all levels, universal childhood immunization against *Haemophilus influenzae* type b and *Streptococcus pneumoniae* infections, improvement of nutrition and low birth weight, control of indoor air pollution arising from household use of solid fuels and second-hand smoking in households, and prevention and management of HIV infection;

Further noting that affordable price of vaccines in preventing pneumonia and significant scaling up of cold chain capacities determine the adoption and implementation of vaccination programmes particularly in developing countries;

Concerned that pneumonia continues to cause more than 1.8 million preventable deaths in children less than five years of age globally each year;

Noting that the GAVI Alliance and other donors have made substantial resources available, and that the International Finance Facility for Immunisation and the PAHO revolving fund for immunization provide powerful mechanisms for directing resources to immunization programmes;

Welcoming the contribution to the mobilization of resources for development of voluntary innovative financing initiatives taken by groups of Member States;

Noting in addition that efforts to strengthen the capacity of health systems to detect and manage pneumonia effectively are likely also to contribute positively to efforts to achieve Millennium Development Goal 5 (Improve maternal health);

Aware that pandemic (H1N1) 2009 has raised awareness of the need for system-wide strengthening of management of serious acute respiratory infections, and noting that the time is therefore opportune to build upon investments made related to the pandemic and to continue efforts to ensure that patients with acute respiratory infections receive prompt and effective treatment,

1. **URGES Member States:**

(1) to apply according to their specific contexts, the policies, strategies and tools recommended by WHO to prevent and treat pneumonia;

(2) to establish evidence-based national policies and operational plans for strengthening health systems in order to expand coverage of populations at risk with effective preventive and curative interventions;

(3) to assess programme performance including the coverage and impact of interventions in an effective and timely manner, and use this assessment to inform WHO’s country-profile database;

(4) to identify national and international resources, both human and financial, for strengthening health systems and for the provision of technical support in order to ensure that the most locally and epidemiologically appropriate strategies are implemented and target populations reached;
(5) to implement the recommendations in the joint WHO/UNICEF global action plan for the prevention and control of pneumonia, noting the importance of:

(a) immunization by accelerating the adoption of affordable and cost-effective vaccines based on evidence of national epidemiological profiles;

(b) case management at community, health centre and hospital levels;

(c) exclusive breastfeeding for six months;

(d) improvement of nutrition and prevention of low birth weight;

(e) control of indoor air pollution, and;

(f) prevention and management of HIV infection;

(6) to encourage integrated approaches to pneumonia prevention and treatment through multisectoral collaboration and community responsibility and participation;

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to strengthen human resources for prevention and control of pneumonia at all levels, especially the country level, thereby improving the capacity of WHO’s country offices to provide support to national health programmes for coordinating the work of partners on preventing and controlling pneumonia;

(2) to bring together interested Member States, organizations in the United Nations system, the GAVI Alliance, medical research councils, and other interested stakeholders in a forum in order to improve coordination between different stakeholders in the fight against pneumonia and mobilize resources to promote the availability of Hib and pneumococcal vaccines;

(3) to expand the coverage of the report to the Health Assembly through the Executive Board on the status of progress made in achieving the health-related Millennium Development Goals, requested in resolution WHA61.18, to include progress on the implementation of this resolution, starting from the Sixty-fourth World Health Assembly.

Twelfth meeting, 22 January 2010
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