

AFR/RC47/R1: Regional strategy for emergency and humanitarian action

The Regional Committee,

Deeply concerned by the increasing frequency and severity of emergencies occurring in Africa;

Recognizing the great magnitude of the health, social, political and economic consequences of both natural and man-made disasters;

Concerned about the inadequacy of national mechanisms and critical resources to deal with emergencies and provide the necessary humanitarian action;

Realizing that the communities are hitherto viewed as mere victims and not as potential actors in dealing with emergencies;

Mindful of resolutions AFR/RC40/R11, AFR/RC42/R11, AFR/RC44/R16 and AFR/RC46/R4 of this Committee on issues related to emergency and humanitarian action adopted in earlier years;

Having carefully examined the Regional Director's report as contained in document AFR/RC47/7 outlining a WHO regional strategy for emergency and humanitarian action;

1. APPROVES the proposed strategy aimed at strengthening WHO's technical cooperation with Member States in the area of emergency and humanitarian action;
2. UNDERSCORES the essential and leading role of WHO in coordinating international preparedness and response to all health aspects of emergencies and disasters;
3. APPEALS to international partners to undertake their interventions in emergency situations within the context of the national health framework and in the most flexible manner in order to ensure that all affected populations, in all areas, benefit from their support, without political consideration;
4. INVITES Member States:
 - (i) to develop or strengthen their capacity to manage emergencies, not only through training, but also by strengthening institutional capacities including early warning systems and allocation of appropriate resources;
 - (ii) to create, where this does not already exist, as a matter of urgency, a National Emergency Fund;
 - (iii) to integrate emergency and humanitarian programmes and activities into their national health development plans;
 - (iv) to take or strengthen measures to effectively involve communities in emergency preparedness and response;
 - (v) to promptly declare emergencies, including notification of epidemics, in order to ensure quick response;

- (vi) to identify, classify and map potential sources of emergencies, in order to facilitate the countries' readiness to cope with them;
- (vii) to set up a multisectoral emergency committee, where this does not exist; and
- (viii) to cooperate with and support neighbouring countries on issues related to emergencies.

5. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

- (i) to provide necessary support to Member States in their efforts to develop their capacity to manage emergencies;
- (ii) to explore the feasibility of having a World Emergency Awareness Day to be used by Member States as an opportunity to sensitize and mobilize all stakeholders around issues related to emergency and humanitarian action;
- (iii) to provide appropriate guidelines and technical support that will facilitate the proper identification, classification and mapping of potential sources of emergencies;
- (iv) to support efforts aimed at enhancing and assuring effective cooperation among countries on issues related to emergency and humanitarian action;
- (v) to develop a roster of African experts in emergency and humanitarian action, and ensure the optimal use of these experts by Member States;
- (vi) to make available appropriate information relating to the capacity of nongovernmental organizations operating in the area of emergency and humanitarian action in the Region, and provide guidance on how to develop and use indigenous ones;
- (vii) to support, as a matter of high priority, studies to assess the real medium and long-term impact of emergencies on the health sector;
- (viii) to report annually to the Regional Committee.

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