

Prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases

The Fifty-third World Health Assembly,

Recalling resolution WHA51.18 on noncommunicable disease prevention and control requesting the Director-General to formulate a global strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and to submit the proposed global strategy and a plan for implementation to the Executive Board and Health Assembly;

Recognizing the enormous human suffering caused by noncommunicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases, and the threat they pose to the economies of many Member States, leading to increasing health inequalities between countries and populations;

Noting that the conditions in which people live and their lifestyles influence their health and quality of life, and that the most prominent noncommunicable diseases are linked to common risk factors, namely, tobacco use, alcohol abuse, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, environmental carcinogens and being aware that these risk factors have economic, social, gender, political, behavioural and environmental determinants;

Reaffirming that the global strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and the ensuing implementation plan are directed at reducing premature mortality and improving quality of life;

Recognizing the leadership role that WHO should play in promoting global action against noncommunicable diseases and its contribution to global health based on its advantages compared to other organizations,

1. URGES Member States:

(1) to develop a national policy framework taking into account several policy instruments such as healthy public policies creating a conducive environment for healthy lifestyles; fiscal and taxation policies towards healthy and unhealthy goods and services; and public media policies empowering the community;

(2) to establish programmes, at national or any other appropriate level, in the framework of the global strategy for the prevention and control of major noncommunicable diseases, and specifically:

- (a) to develop a mechanism to provide evidence-based information for policy-making, advocacy, programme monitoring and evaluation;
- (b) to assess and monitor mortality and morbidity attributable to noncommunicable disease, and the level of exposure to risk factors and their determinants in the population, by strengthening the health information system;
- (c) to continue pursuit of intersectoral and cross-cutting health goals required for prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases by according noncommunicable diseases priority on the public health agenda;
- (d) to emphasize the key role of governmental functions, including regulatory functions, when combating noncommunicable diseases, such as development of nutrition policy, control of tobacco products, prevention of alcohol abuse and policies to encourage physical activity;
- (e) to promote community-based initiatives for prevention of noncommunicable diseases, based on a comprehensive risk-factor approach;
- (f) based on available evidence, to support the development of clinical guidelines for cost-effective screening, diagnosis and treatment of common noncommunicable diseases;
- (g) appropriate health promotion strategies be included in school health programmes and in programmes geared to youth.

(3) to promote the effectiveness of secondary and tertiary prevention, including rehabilitation and long-term care, and to ensure that health care systems are responsive to chronic noncommunicable diseases and that their management is based on cost-effective health care interventions and equitable access;

(4) to share their national experiences and to build the capacity at regional, national and community levels for the development, implementation and evaluation of programmes for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases;

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to continue giving priority to the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, with special emphasis on developing countries and other deprived populations;

(2) to ensure that the leadership provided by WHO in combating noncommunicable diseases and their risk factors is based on the best available evidence, and thus to facilitate, with international partners, capacity building and establishment of a global network of information systems;

(3) to provide technical support and appropriate guidance to Member States in assessing their needs, developing effective health promotion programmes, adapting their health care systems, and addressing gender issues related to the growing epidemic of noncommunicable diseases;

(4) to strengthen existing partnerships and develop new ones, notably with specialized national and international nongovernmental organizations, with a view to sharing responsibilities for implementation of the global strategy based on each partner's expertise;

- (5) to coordinate, in collaboration with the international community, global partnerships and alliances for resource mobilization, advocacy, capacity building and collaborative research;
- (6) to promote the adoption of international intersectoral policies, regulations and other appropriate measures that minimize the effect of the major risk factors of noncommunicable diseases;
- (7) to promote and initiate collaborative research on noncommunicable diseases, including research on behavioural determinants and to strengthen the role of WHO collaborating centres in supporting implementation of the global prevention and control strategy;
- (8) to pursue dialogue with the pharmaceutical industry, with a view to improving accessibility to drugs to collectively treat major noncommunicable diseases and their determinants.

Eighth plenary meeting, 20 May 2000
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