

55th DIRECTING COUNCIL

68th SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF WHO FOR THE AMERICAS

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RESOLUTION

CD55.R13

HEALTH OF MIGRANTS

THE 55th DIRECTING COUNCIL,

Having reviewed the policy document *Health of Migrants* (Document CD55/11);

Recognizing that human migration is one of the most challenging priorities in global public health;

Considering that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international law recognize the right of individuals to leave any country, including their own, and that the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration, including health-related rights, belong to all persons, including migrants, refugees, and other non-nationals;

Considering the urgent need for the majority of countries to strengthen their health systems including from the perspective of the right to health where nationally recognized and promoting the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, with the fundamental goals of achieving universal access to health and universal health coverage;

Recognizing that the plight of migrants has been increasingly recognized and its prominence reflected on the international agenda, in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and most recently in the New York Declaration approved by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2016;¹

Observing that for decades PAHO Member States have prioritized the health of migrant and displaced populations, generating arrangements for collaborative responses;

¹ [New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](#) (A/71.L.1)

and recognizing that PAHO has approved several resolutions that promote the incorporation of the respect for human rights and human security in country health policies, plans, programs, and health-related laws to strengthen the resilience of members of migrant populations in the highest conditions of vulnerability;

Recognizing that border areas constitute points of passage for migrants and have specific characteristics that require bilateral or multilateral initiatives for discussion and coordination of actions for health;

Noting that PAHO Member States have demonstrated a heightened appreciation for the development of health policies and programs to address health inequities and improve access to health services;

Recognizing that the Strategy for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage, adopted by Resolution CD53.R14 (2014), constitutes a framework for the action of health systems to protect the health and well-being of migrants, and recognizing the contributions of prior PAHO strategies and mandates that deal with this issue and that are aligned with other related strategies and commitments, including the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals,

RESOLVES:

1. To support the policy document *Health of Migrants* (Document CD55/11).
2. To urge the Member States, as appropriate to their context, priorities, and institutional and legal frameworks, to:
 - a) utilize this policy document in their efforts to generate health policies and programs to address health inequities that affect migrants and to develop targeted interventions to reduce migrants' health risks by strengthening programs and services that are sensitive to their conditions and needs;
 - b) lead the effort to modify or improve regulatory and legal frameworks in order to address the specific health needs of migrant individuals, families, and groups;
 - c) advance towards providing migrants with access to the same level of financial protection² and of comprehensive, quality, progressively expanded health services that other people living in the same territory enjoy, regardless of their migratory status, as appropriate to national context, priorities, and institutional and legal frameworks;

² Financial protection, as established in the Strategy for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage (Document CD53/5, Rev. 2 [2014]) is a means to “advance toward the elimination of direct payment [...] that constitutes a barrier to access at the point of service, avoiding impoverishment and exposure to catastrophic expenditures. Increasing financial protection will reduce inequity in the access to health services”.

- d) promote action at the bilateral, multilateral, national, and local levels to generate proposals for the coordination and articulation of programs and policies on health issues considered to be of common interest in the border areas involved.
3. To request the Director to:
- a) use the policy document *Health of Migrants* to increase advocacy and promote the mobilization of national resources to develop policies and programs that are sensitive to the health needs of migrant populations;
 - b) develop actions, technical resources, and tools to support the inclusion of the proposed policy elements within PAHO's program of work;
 - c) strengthen interagency coordination and collaboration mechanisms to achieve synergies and efficiency in technical cooperation, including within the United Nations system, and particularly with the International Organization for Migration, the Inter-American system, and other stakeholders working toward improving the health and protection of migrants in countries of origin, transit, and destination;
 - d) facilitate the exchange of experiences among Member States, and generate a repository of information on relevant experiences in the countries of the Region of the Americas.

(Ninth meeting, 30 September 2016)