

Noncommunicable disease prevention and control

The Fifty-first World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report by the Director-General on noncommunicable disease prevention and control;

Recalling *The world health report 1997*, which describes the high rates of mortality, morbidity and disability from major noncommunicable diseases, which account for nearly half of all deaths, a considerable proportion of them premature;

Noting that noncommunicable diseases already represent a significant burden on the public health services of Member States and that the problem is growing;

Alarmed by the rising trend and the bleak forecast for the twenty-first century as a consequence of the demographic and epidemiological transition, and the globalization of economic processes;

Recognizing that they cause enormous human suffering and threaten the economies of Member States, where costly treatment will further deprive the poor and powerless and increase the inequities in health between population groups and countries;

Mindful of common major behavioural and environmental risk factors that are more amenable to modification through the implementation of concerted essential public health action, as has been demonstrated recently in several Member States;

Aware that, as resources diminish, health professionals, particularly those in the forefront of health care delivery, often become the major source of health information as well as the providers of care and support to individuals and communities;

Recognizing the importance of, and continued need for, broad international action and cooperation in the development and promotion of policies and strategies to assist Member States in meeting the growing challenge of chronic noncommunicable diseases in the most cost-effective way,

1. ENDORSES the proposed framework for the integrated prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, including the support of healthy lifestyles, the provision of public health services and the major involvement of health, nutrition and other relevant professions in improving the lifestyles and health of individuals and communities;

2. URGES Member States to collaborate with WHO in developing a global strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases based on best practices and operational research, as part of their health sector reforms, in order:

- (a) to promote health and reduce major common risk factors for chronic noncommunicable diseases through essential public health action and the integration of preventive measures within the functions of health services, and particularly in primary health care;
- (b) to collate information and set standards in order to ensure appropriate case detection and management;
- (c) to monitor scientific data and support research in a broad spectrum of related areas, including human genetics, nutrition and diet, matters of particular concern to women, and development of human resources for health;
- (d) to exert a concerted effort against the use of tobacco, throughout the world and especially in order to protect the world's young people;

3. REQUESTS the Director-General:

- (1) to develop a global strategy for prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases within the framework of the renewed WHO health-for-all policy for the twenty-first century and, in consultation with Member States and the agencies and professional organizations concerned, to give priority to such activities to help Member States develop corresponding national policies and programmes;
- (2) to ensure, while developing the strategy, an effective managerial mechanism for collaboration and technical support involving all programmes concerned at different levels of the Organization, as well as WHO collaborating centres, emphasizing the development and strengthening of global and regional demonstration projects;
- (3) to solicit the support of nongovernmental organizations and other international agencies by creating a forum for the exchange of experience and results of research;
- (4) to encourage cooperation with the private sector, within the current guidelines of WHO, so as to mobilize extrabudgetary resources for the implementation of plans at the global and interregional level and to promote capacity-building at the national level;
- (5) to submit the proposed global strategy and a plan, with a timetable for its implementation, to the Executive Board and the Health Assembly in 1999.

Tenth plenary meeting, 16 May 1998
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