

The Regional Committee,

Having considered the report on essential public health functions: the role of ministries of health;¹

Acknowledging the need to ensure that the public health infrastructure is positioned to respond effectively and efficiently to broadening public health demands and challenges;

Noting that the Western Pacific Regional Office has identified a need to evaluate and strengthen public health infrastructures in Member States in order to meet current and future public health demands;

Recognizing that many essential public health functions are central to the responsibility of the State, particularly the ministry of health, for effective stewardship with respect to health;

Further recognizing the need for health sector reforms to pay greater attention to public health;

Recalling that health systems were one of the eleven priorities identified in the general programme of work, 2002-2005, approved by the Fifty-fourth World Health Assembly in resolution WHA54.1, and recognizing that public health is a significant and crucial part of every health system;

1. URGES Member States:

- (1) to evaluate and monitor the delivery of all essential public health functions;
- (2) to strengthen their public health infrastructure wherever gaps and weaknesses are identified;
- (3) to incorporate work on essential public health functions into sectoral reform;
- (4) to monitor and evaluate the impact of policies of other sectors on public health and to respond in an appropriate and timely manner in order to ensure protection of public health;

2. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

- (1) to pursue further consultation and discussions with Member States and other relevant parties on the proposed essential public health functions;
- (2) to develop guidelines, tools and indicators based on essential public health functions that will assist Member States to evaluate, monitor, and strengthen their public health infrastructures and responsibilities;
- (3) to promote the reorientation of health professionals, managers, policy-makers and government institutions in the Region towards public health, in line with the development of essential public health functions, and the strengthening of the central role of the ministry of health;
- (4) to disseminate to Member States the documentation on the three-country case-study on essential public health functions undertaken in the Region;
- (5) to report back to the Regional Committee by 2006.

¹ Document WPR/RCS3/10.