



R E S O L U T I O N

REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR
THE WESTERN PACIFIC

COMITE REGIONAL DU
PACIFIQUE OCCIDENTAL

WPR/RC59.R7
26 September 2008

PROTECTING HEALTH FROM THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The Regional Committee,

Recalling resolution WHA51.29 on the protection of human health from risks related to climate change and stratospheric ozone depletion, resolution WHA61.19 on climate change and health, and resolution WPR/RC56.R7 on environmental health, all of which call for action to reduce the health impact of climate change;

Recognizing with concern the recent findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that the effects of temperature increases on some aspects of human health are already being observed, and that the net global effect of projected climate change on human health is expected to be negative, especially in developing countries, small island developing states and vulnerable local communities;

Noting with concern that the regional consultations held in 2007 identified current and emerging climate change-related health risks in the Region to include heat stress and waterborne and foodborne diseases associated with extreme weather events, vectorborne diseases, respiratory diseases due to air pollution and aeroallergens, food and water insecurity, malnutrition and psychosocial impacts from displacement;

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Mindful that there are ongoing efforts to improve health systems to combat these health impacts, but climate change may require additional efforts to strengthen adaptive capacity of health systems to climate change;

Acknowledging that capacity to assess and minimize the health risks of climate change is limited, particularly in developing countries, especially Pacific island countries and areas;

Noting that WHO will present a draft workplan to the Executive Board at its 124th session on addressing the implications of climate change for health and health systems;

Recognizing the need for the health sector to advocate for decisions on mitigation and adaptation to climate change by other sectors, which will protect and promote health at the same time, and participate in the national and international processes that guide policy and resources for work on climate change;

Having reviewed the draft Regional Framework for Action to Protect Human Health from the Effects of Climate Change in the Asia Pacific Region,

1. ENDORSES the Regional Framework for Action to Protect Human Health from the Effects of Climate Change in the Asia Pacific Region as a guide for planning and implementing actions to protect health from the effects of climate change, while noting that a global workplan is expected to be adopted at the Sixty-second World Health Assembly to ensure coherence across WHO regions, a strong evidence base and non-duplication of efforts;

2. URGES Member States:

(1) to develop national strategies and plans to incorporate current and projected climate change risks into health policies, plans and programmes to control climate-sensitive health risks and outcomes;

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- (2) to strengthen existing health infrastructure and human resources, as well as surveillance, early warning, and communication and response systems for climate-sensitive risks and diseases;
- (3) to establish programmes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the health sector;
- (4) to assess the health implications of the decisions made on climate change by other sectors, such as urban planning, transport, energy supply, food production and water resources, and advocate for decisions that provide opportunities for improving health;
- (5) to facilitate the health sector to actively participate in the preparation of national communications and national adaptation programmes of action;
- (6) to actively participate in the preparation of a workplan for scaling up WHO's technical support to Member States for assessing and addressing the implications of climate change for health;

3. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

- (1) to provide technical guidance and support to Member States for health vulnerability and adaptation assessment and to collaborate with other relevant organizations and Member States to undertake studies of the health impact of climate change;
- (2) to strengthen country-level support to build national capacities to develop and implement national strategies and plans on mitigation and adaptation to climate change;
- (3) to support Member States with training programmes on methodologies in the assessment and management of health risks due to climate change;

- (4) to provide technical guidance on best practices of adaptation and mitigation within the health sector;
- (5) to collaborate region-wide and with centres on mechanisms to share pertinent information, provide technical expertise for capacity-building and, taking into account global mandates, monitor the implementation of the Regional Framework for Action to Protect Human Health from the Effects of Climate Change in the Asia Pacific Region;
- (6) to enhance cooperation with United Nations organizations and programmes, bilateral development assistance agencies, the private sector and development banks to increase the resources to implement the Regional Framework for Action;
- (7) to report periodically to the Regional Committee on the progress made in implementing the Regional Framework for Action.