



REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-second session
Harare, Zimbabwe, 8–12 October 2002

RESOLUTION

POVERTY AND HEALTH: A STRATEGY FOR THE AFRICAN REGION

The Regional Committee,

Aware of the intricate and complex linkages between poverty and health, especially in African countries;

Concerned about the deterioration of the health status of the majority of African people during the last decade, in addition to the heavy burden of disease on adults and children;

Recalling resolution AFR/RC50/R1 related to the regional strategy entitled 'Health-for-All Policy for the 21st Century in the African Region: Agenda 2020', and the recommendations of the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health to scale up investments in the health sector in order to reduce poverty and foster economic growth in African countries;

Appreciating the efforts Member countries and the international community have made in recent years through the Highly-Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)/Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSPs) framework in order to improve policy implementation towards poverty reduction objectives;

Recognizing the necessity for WHO to fully play its critical role in reducing poverty and catalysing economic growth and social welfare, consistent with the internationally-adopted Millennium Development Goals;

Having carefully examined the Regional Director's report contained in document AFR/RC52/11 outlining the regional strategy for poverty and health, and aiming at supporting the health sector for a significant contribution in achieving national poverty reduction objectives;

1. APPROVES the proposed strategy;
2. REQUESTS Member States:
 - (a) to undertake appropriate reforms in the health sector in the context of broader public sector reforms that effectively improve in the short term the health status of the poor;
 - (b) to update national health policies based on a long-term strategic planning approach;
 - (c) to increase the budget allocated to the health sector in accordance with the Abuja Declaration, which commits countries to allocating 15% of their total budget to the health sector;
 - (d) to support efforts made by civil society and other stakeholders to improve the health of the poor at the grass roots level in order to increase the absorptive capacity of the health

sector and improve the responsiveness of public sector management to poverty reduction goals;

- (e) to advocate at the national and international levels for more resources to be allocated to the health sector, and to develop a transparent mechanism for managing, monitoring and evaluating such resources;

3. URGES the Regional Director:

- (a) to provide technical support to Member States for the development of national health policies and programmes for poverty reduction;
- (b) to increase support, through training institutions, to national professionals in the field of health and development in order to strengthen their capacities for policy analysis, monitoring and evaluation;
- (c) to assist in mobilizing additional resources for the implementation of this strategy;
- (d) to report to the fifty-fifth session of the Regional Committee in 2005 on the progress made in the implementation of this strategy.

Sixth meeting, 10 October 2002