

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**ROAD MAP FOR ACCELERATING THE ATTAINMENT
OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS RELATING
TO MATERNAL AND NEWBORN HEALTH IN AFRICA**

(document AFR/RC54/INF.DOC/6)

The Regional Committee,

Recalling World Health Assembly resolutions WHA 40.27 on maternal health and safe motherhood, WHA 42.42 on women's health and WHA 55.19 on WHO's contribution to the achievement of the development goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

Bearing in mind Regional Committee resolutions AFR/RC39/R8 on maternal health and safe motherhood; AFR/RC44/R11, Regional strategy for the accelerated reduction of maternal and neonatal mortality in the African Region; AFR/RC47/R5, Reproductive health strategy for the African Region 1998-2007; AFR/RC50/TD/1, Reducing maternal mortality: A challenge for the 21st century; AFR/RC40/R2, Accelerating the improvement of maternal and child health; AFR/RC43/R6, Women, health and development; and AFR/RC53/11, Women's health: A strategy for the African Region;

Concerned about the persistent but avoidable deaths and disabilities of women during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period and about the fact that this situation is further aggravated by poverty, armed conflicts, the high level of adolescent pregnancy, the HIV/AIDS pandemics and harmful traditional practices;

Aware of the fact that Africa has the highest level of maternal morbidity and mortality in the world with at least 1500 women dying each day in the process of childbirth, and that for every woman who dies as a result of pregnancy-related complications, approximately 30 others will suffer short-or long-term disabilities;

Appreciating the decision of the international community to include maternal and child health in the millennium development goals with a target of a 75% reduction of maternal mortality and two-thirds reduction of under-five mortality by 2015;

Recognizing that traditional birth attendants are still providing care to a significant number of pregnant women in rural areas;

1. ADOPTS the Road Map for accelerating the attainment of the millennium development goals relating to maternal and newborn health in Africa;
2. URGES Member States:
 - (a) to implement the Road Map for accelerating the attainment of the millennium development goals relating to maternal and newborn health in Africa through increased investment in maternal and newborn health;

- (b) to scale up actions and interventions aimed at reducing maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality, and in particular: the development, deployment and retention of skilled attendants at all levels of the health care delivery system; the improvement of access to, and availability of, quality maternal and newborn services, including family planning and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV; the strengthening of the referral system to ensure a continuum of care; the empowerment of communities; and the strengthening of the monitoring and evaluation of progress made by Member States towards the realization of these commitments;
- (c) to strengthen health systems in order to provide appropriate technologies and interventions for improving maternal and newborn health;
- (d) to review policies and legal frameworks, including practice regulation, that would permit the equitable deployment of health professionals especially to underserved and rural areas;
- (e) to undertake appropriate action at the community, primary health care and referral care levels, in particular the strengthening of linkages and provision of emergency obstetric care;
- (f) to mobilize international partners, civil society organizations, the private sector and other stakeholders to significantly contribute to the overall reduction of maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality in Africa;
- (g) to review and rationalize the role of traditional birth attendants in the provision of clean and safe delivery;

3. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

- (a) to continue to advocate for increased investment in maternal and newborn health and to mobilize resources for the establishment of a special fund for maternal and newborn health;
- (b) to provide technical support to Member States for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the national Road Maps;
- (c) to develop relevant tools and guidelines to be used by Member States to strengthen the health care delivery system, in particular for emergency obstetric care;
- (d) to support Member States with appropriate mid-level health workers for the provision of emergency obstetric and newborn care;
- (e) to assist member states to embark on very aggressive campaigns for training programmes for midlevel health workers in obstetric care in order to increase coverage in the provision of maternal and newborn health;
- (f) to report to the fifty-fifth session of the Regional Committee, and subsequently every two years, on progress made in the implementation of the Road Map.