

REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

AFR/RC56/R4
1 September 2006

Fifty-sixth session

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 28 August–1 September 2006

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

RESOLUTION

POVERTY, TRADE AND HEALTH: AN EMERGING HEALTH DEVELOPMENT ISSUE (document AFR/RC56/9)

The Regional Committee,

Recalling the African regional strategy on poverty entitled "Poverty and health: a strategy for the African Region" (AFR/RC53/9);

Recalling resolution AFR/RC52/R4 on poverty and health;

Noting with satisfaction the progress report of the Regional Director on the implementation of resolution AFR/RC52/R4;

Welcoming progress made by the African countries towards poverty reduction;

Recalling resolutions WHA59.24 on Public health, innovation, essential health research and intellectual property rights: towards a global strategy and plan of action; WHA56.27 on Intellectual property rights, innovation and public health; WHA59.26 on International trade and health;

Welcoming the report of the Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health;

Noting with interest the ongoing work of the Commission on the Social Determinants of Health;

Alarmed that according to the Millennium Development Goals Report of 2005, millions more people have sunk deep into poverty in sub-Saharan Africa, where the poor are getting poorer;

Bearing in mind the recommendations of the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health report, *Investing in health for economic development* (2001) and noting its references to poverty;

Concerned that poverty is the world's greatest killer and the major cause of ill-health and suffering;

Recognizing that trade liberalization can be a powerful tool in fostering development, reducing poverty and improving health;

Recognizing further that economic growth is the primary means by which countries in the Region can reduce poverty;

Emphasizing the need for countries in the Region to position themselves strategically to take advantage of the opportunities offered by liberalization of health services and adequately address any attendant risks;

Having considered the Regional Committee document, "Poverty, trade and health: an emerging health development issue" (AFR/RC56/9), in particular the proposed way forward;

1. URGES Member States:

- (a) to promote multi-stakeholder dialogue at national level to consider the interplay between international trade and health;
- (b) to adopt, where necessary, policies, laws and regulations that deal with issues identified in that dialogue and take advantage of the potential opportunities, and address the potential challenges that trade and trade agreements may have for health, considering, where appropriate, using the flexibilities inherent in them;
- (c) to apply or establish, where necessary, coordination mechanisms involving ministries of finance, health and trade, and other relevant institutions, to address public health-related aspects of international trade;
- (d) to create constructive and interactive relationships across the public and private sectors for the purpose of generating coherence in their trade and health policies;
- (e) to continue to develop capacity at national level to track and analyse the potential opportunities and challenges of trade and trade agreements for health-sector performance and health outcomes;
- (f) to establish or strengthen as appropriate coordination mechanisms involving ministries of health, trade, commerce and other related institutions to address public health-related aspects of international trade;

- (g) to continue implementing resolution AFR/RC52/R4, in particular, paragraphs 2(a) to 2(e);
2. INVITES relevant partners:
- (a) to ensure that health is taken into account when trade policies are developed;
 - (b) to continue to provide information and advice to Member States on matters pertaining to trade and public health;
 - (c) to support the strengthening of national capacities to effectively negotiate and implement trade agreements and other health-related conventions in a way that promotes and protects public health;
3. REQUESTS the Regional Director:
- (a) to provide support to Member States, at their request and in collaboration with the competent international organizations, in their efforts to frame coherent policies to address the relationship between trade and health;
 - (b) to respond to Member States' requests for support of their efforts to build capacity to understand the implications of international trade and trade agreements for health; to address relevant issues through policies and legislation that take advantage of the potential opportunities; and to address the potential challenges that trade and trade agreements may have for health;
 - (c) to continue collaborating with the competent international organizations in order to support policy coherence between trade and health sectors at national and regional levels, including generating and sharing evidence on the relationship between trade and health;
 - (d) to continue implementing resolution AFR/RC52/R4, in particular, paragraphs 3(a) to 3(c);
 - (e) to report to the Regional Committee every two years on progress made in implementing this resolution.

Fifth meeting, 30 August 2006