



REGIONAL OFFICE FOR

**World Health  
Organization**

**Africa**

**AFR/RC53/R4**  
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**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA**

**ORIGINAL: ENGLISH**

Fifty-third session

Johannesburg, South Africa, 1–5 September 2003

## **RESOLUTION**

### **WOMEN'S HEALTH: A STRATEGY FOR THE AFRICAN REGION**

The Regional Committee,

Recalling previous World Health Assembly resolutions WHA40.27, WHA42.42, WHA43.10 and WHA45.25 on women's health and development;

Bearing in mind the Regional Committee resolutions AFR/RC39/R9 on traditional practices affecting the health of women and children, AFR/RC43/R6 on women, health and development and AFR/RC47/R4 on promotion of the participation of women in health and development;

Adhering to the Health-for-All Policy for the 21st Century in the African Region: Agenda 2020 that calls for the creation of conditions that will enable women to participate in, benefit from and play a leadership role in health development;

Mindful of the human rights instruments stated in international and regional conventions, declarations and charters;

Concerned about the extremely high level of morbidity and mortality in women, and the additional efforts that will be needed by Member States to achieve international goals for women's health, including maternal health;

Convinced of the need for sex-disaggregated data and the incorporation of a gender perspective in health programmes;

1. **APPROVES** the document, "Women's Health: A Strategy for the African Region", which focuses and emphasizes health conditions that are exclusive to or more prevalent in women as well as those which have more severe consequences and imply specific risk factors for women;
2. **COMMENDS** the Regional Director for advocating for, promoting and supporting women's health in the Region;

3. URGES Member States:

- (a) to accord greater priority to women's health in their national socioeconomic development agenda through strengthening and expanding efforts to meet international targets for improved women's health, particularly the education of the girl-child;
- (b) to make additional efforts to improve advocacy at the highest level for women-sensitive health policies and programmes, resources, partnerships creation, and sustained political commitment to the Abuja Declaration;
- (c) to promote access by all women to a full range of information and quality health services, focusing on the major causes of morbidity and mortality;
- (d) to accelerate the implementation of interventions aimed at eliminating all forms of violence and harmful traditional practices, based on existing international and regional strategies;
- (e) to equip health personnel, communities, families and individuals, women and men, with the requisite skills to enable them develop, implement, monitor and evaluate women's health policies and programmes at all levels.

4. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

- (a) to provide technical support to Member States for the development of policies, and the implementation of agreed conventions and declarations towards the attainment of international goals on women's health;
- (b) to continue to advocate for a strategic approach to the reduction of morbidity and mortality in women, including the effective interventions in the Safe Motherhood Initiative, regional plans for the elimination of female genital mutilation and other harmful traditional practices, prevention of violence, and education of the girl-child;
- (c) to mobilize governments, UN agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders to organize symposia, conferences and workshops to refocus women's health in the national development agenda;
- (d) to support public and private institutions and national experts to carry out research on identified priorities and document findings and best practices for use by Member States in the full implementation of cost-effective approaches for improved women's health;
- (e) to maintain WHO commitment to the incorporation of gender perspective in policies and programmes;
- (f) to report to the fifty-sixth session of the Regional Committee and every three years thereafter on the progress made in the implementation of the women's health strategy.