



**World Health
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Africa**

AFR/RC62/R5
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REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

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Sixty-second session

Luanda, Republic of Angola, 19–23 November 2012

RESOLUTION

THE AFRICAN HEALTH OBSERVATORY: OPPORTUNITY FOR STRENGTHENING HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEMS THROUGH NATIONAL HEALTH OBSERVATORIES (Document AFR/RC62/13)

The Regional Committee,

Having considered Document AFR/RC62/13 entitled: “The African Health Observatory: opportunity for strengthening health information systems through national health observatories”;

Aware of the importance of evidence in shaping policy and decision-making and the role of improved health information and research in strengthening national health systems in order to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the MDGs and the improvement of health outcomes in the Region;

Noting that health observatories can improve the availability, quality and use of information and evidence for policy- and decision-making by strengthening health information systems, including public health surveillance;

Noting also the establishment of the African Health Observatory, and its role as the core of a reinforced regional health information system, interacting with national health observatories (NHOs), to contribute to data collection and analysis, monitoring and evaluation at national level;

Recognizing that national health observatories, as information technology platforms designed to facilitate multistakeholder collaboration and partnership in accessing and using information for strengthening national health information systems, serve as repositories of the best available information and provide tools to strengthen the monitoring of health status and trends;

Recalling Regional Committee decisions and resolutions on strengthening national health information systems (AFR/RC54/R3: 2004), knowledge management (AFR/RC56/R8: 2006), and eHealth (AFR/RC60/R3: 2010); the Ouagadougou Declaration on Primary Health Care and Health Systems in Africa: Achieving Better Health for Africa in the New Millennium (AFR/RC59/4: 2009); and the Algiers Declaration on Research for Health (AFR/RC58/12: 2008 and AFR/RC59/5: 2009);

Stressing that developing and using NHOs for multistakeholder participation and for strengthening capabilities to generate, acquire, share and apply information would strengthen national health systems;

1. **ENDORSES** Document AFR/RC62/13 entitled “The African Health Observatory: opportunity for strengthening health information systems through national health observatories”;
2. **URGES** Member States:
 - (a) to continue to support and strengthen their national health information systems for better evidence for policy and action;
 - (b) to establish NHOs by constituting a country-wide, multisectoral and multidisciplinary group involving all key stakeholders to coordinate their efforts; and a secretariat with sufficient capacity preferably located within the health information unit of the ministry of health;
 - (c) to conduct a national review and mapping of stakeholders, including national and subnational institutions dealing with health information as part of the process of developing NHOs;
 - (d) to provide adequate and sustainable funding, support the necessary actions to raise the awareness of relevant stakeholders, and promote the establishment and strengthening of NHOs;
 - (e) to identify appropriate technologies to be used by NHOs, bearing in mind the current state of information technology infrastructure in their countries;
 - (f) to ensure that these technologies follow common data and communication standards and are interoperable with those of both the African Health Observatory and other NHOs in the Region;
 - (g) to support NHOs in continuing education by developing and providing appropriate resources for collaborative learning, eLearning or traditional forms of learning;
 - (h) to monitor NHOs and document and share best practices;
3. **URGES** International partners to fund and actively participate in strengthening NHO capabilities to generate, acquire, share and apply information in alignment with country efforts;
4. **REQUESTS** the Regional Director:
 - (a) to advocate for and facilitate the coordination of partners’ action for adequate resource mobilization and efficient technical cooperation;
 - (b) to provide technical support for the establishment and strengthening of NHOs;
 - (c) to support Member States in monitoring NHOs and documenting and sharing best practices;
 - (d) to report to the Sixty-third session of the Regional Committee and, thereafter, every other year, on the progress being made.