



**World Health  
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Africa**

**AFR/RC59/R5**  
4 September 2009

**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA**

**ORIGINAL: ENGLISH**

Fifty-ninth session

Kigali, Republic of Rwanda, 31 August–4 September 2009

## **RESOLUTION**

### **STRENGTHENING OUTBREAK PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN THE AFRICAN REGION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT INFLUENZA PANDEMIC**

The Regional Committee,

Having carefully examined the technical paper on strengthening outbreak preparedness and response in the African Region in the context of the current influenza pandemic;

Aware that national health systems are overburdened and lack adequate human, financial and preparedness capacity to respond to the current pandemic;

Deeply concerned that the continued international spread of the newly emerged influenza A (H1N1) may result in a humanitarian, social and economic burden on Member States;

Concerned about the potential impact of the current pandemic influenza on vulnerable populations in the African Region who are already suffering from multiple diseases and conditions;

Acknowledging the high level of commitment of Member States to prevention and control of epidemic- and pandemic-prone diseases;

Noting the communiqué on the new influenza A (H1N1) issued by the fourth session of the African Union Conference of Ministers of Health held in Addis Ababa from 4 to 8 May 2009;

Reaffirming our commitment to implementing Resolutions AFR/RC48/R2 on integrated disease surveillance; AFR/RC56/R7 on preparedness and response to the threat of an avian influenza pandemic; AFR/RC58/R2 on strengthening public health laboratories; and WHA61.2 on implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005);

1. ENDORSES the technical paper (Document AFR/RC59/12) and approves the proposed actions aimed at strengthening the capacity of Member States to prepare for and respond to epidemics and pandemics;

2. URGES Member States:

- (a) to implement communication strategies that regularly provide up-to-date information to all levels of the community regarding what is known about circulating epidemic- and pandemic-prone diseases, appropriate home-based care and protective measures people can take to reduce the risk of infection;
- (b) to ensure the highest level of government support in addressing the new influenza A (H1N1) threat;
- (c) to reduce the potential impact of epidemic- and pandemic-prone diseases on populations by ensuring uninterrupted provision of health care services, maintaining adequate treatment supplies and implementing basic infection control measures to protect health care staff and patients;
- (d) to strengthen the capacity of health services to reduce disease transmission in health care facilities by ensuring regular water supplies and sanitation and by assuring access to hand-hygiene facilities with water and soap at all levels;
- (e) to continue integrated disease surveillance and expand it to all levels including the community and implement the International Health Regulations (2005) within the framework of integrated surveillance;
- (f) to strengthen capacity for influenza diagnosis by providing sufficient material and financial resources to support public health laboratory functions;
- (g) to periodically update their preparedness and response plans and ensure that there is adequate funding for that purpose;
- (h) to ensure financial contribution to the “African Public Health Emergency Fund”, as articulated in the terms of references proposed by WHO Secretariat.

3. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

- (a) to provide technical support to Member States for the development and implementation of national outbreak prevention and control plans;
- (b) to advocate for additional resources at national and international levels for the implementation of outbreak prevention and control measures in Member States, taking into account the continued threat of outbreaks of diseases including influenza;
- (c) to facilitate the creation of an ‘African Public Health Emergency Fund’ that will support the investigation of and response to epidemics and other public health emergencies; by:
  - (i) developing the justification for and terms of reference of this fund, including the use of the WHO financial management systems;
  - (ii) consulting the African Union Commission on the establishment of this fund and advocating to heads of state and government on the need to contribute to this fund;
  - (iii) proposing to Member States the minimum contribution to be made to this fund;
  - (iv) creating a rotational advisory committee that will advise the Regional Director on the utilization of the funds raised;

- (d) to continue collaborating with the African Union and regional economic communities in strengthening disease surveillance in the African Region;
- (e) to report to the Sixtieth Regional Committee, and on a regular basis thereafter, on the progress being made.

*Fifth meeting, 1 September 2009*