
Regional Committee for Europe

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Resolution

Accelerating progress towards healthy, prosperous lives for all, increasing equity in health and leaving no one behind in the WHO European Region

The Regional Committee,

Reaffirming the commitment made in resolution EUR/RC62/R4 to reducing and eradicating health inequities as a necessary contribution to inclusive growth and sustainable development, in line with Health 2020, the European policy framework for health and well-being, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,¹ the Sustainable Development Goals, WHO's Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023, and the principle of universal health coverage;

Recalling other global and regional United Nations and WHO declarations, resolutions, programmes and strategies that establish or emphasize the commitment to tackling the

¹ Adopted in United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/1.

determinants of health and health inequities and underscore the principles of health equity over the life course;²

Recognizing that inequities in health are among the consequences of unevenly distributed social, economic, environmental and commercial determinants of health that together with gender norms and stereotypes prevent people from achieving their health potential;

Recognizing that a reduction in health inequities is only achievable through whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, as well as through health-in-all-policies, equity-based and life-course approaches;

Affirming that stronger partnerships and alliances are needed to bring the social values of solidarity, equity, social justice, inclusion and gender equality into mainstream fiscal and growth policies, so that no one is left behind due to poor health;

Recognizing that no single intervention or policy will eliminate health inequities and that comprehensive universal and targeted policies are needed;

Noting the findings and recommendations of the WHO European Health Equity Status Report Initiative (HESRi), which inform progress towards health equity through creating the conditions that are essential for a healthy, prosperous life³ in Europe;

² The Declaration of Alma-Ata on primary health care (1978); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); the Rio Political Declaration on Social Determinants of Health (2011); the European Declaration and Action Plan on the Health of Children and Young People with Intellectual Disabilities and their Families (2011); the global strategy and action plan on ageing and health 2016–2020; the Minsk Declaration on the Life-course Approach in the Context of Health 2020 (2015); the Paris Declaration on partnerships for the health and well-being of our young and future generations (2016); the European Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2020; the European Food and Nutrition Action Plan 2015–2020; the global plan of action to strengthen the role of the health system within a national multisectoral response to address interpersonal violence, in particular against women and girls, and against children (2016); the WHO global disability action plan 2014–2021; the Action Plan for Sexual and Reproductive Health: towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Europe – leaving no one behind (2016); the Ostrava Declaration (2017); and resolution WHA70.15 on promoting the health of refugees and migrants (2017).

³ The essential conditions identified through the HESRi are: (a) health services; (b) income security and social protection; (c) decent living conditions; (d) social and human capital; and (e) decent work and employment conditions.

Taking note of the regional high-level conference on accelerating progress for equity in health, held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 11–13 June 2019, that focused on the solutions and partnerships required to advance equity in health within and between countries;

Acknowledging the imperative to accelerate progress for healthy, prosperous lives for all in the WHO European Region;

1. URGES Member States:⁴

- (a) to work towards placing health equity at the centre of government decision-making, investment and implementation of policies and programmes within health as well as in other sectors, through adopting whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches and participation;
- (b) to scale up efforts to promote the engagement of relevant government sectors and stakeholders in developing solutions to accelerate the closing of gaps in health and well-being between social groups and geographical areas within and across European countries;
- (c) to perform, across all government sectors, impact assessments of policies that determine the essential conditions needed to live a healthy life;
- (d) to implement approaches which are empowering, inclusive and participative, provide opportunities for healthy life choices, and ensure that the representation and participation of those left behind is reflected in decision-making for health and well-being;
- (e) to review the impact of the health sector on the development of and response to health inequities and, as appropriate, take necessary action;
- (f) to advocate for a reduction in exposure to, and the consequences of, physical and psychological threats to health and well-being that stem from adverse living conditions, by creating healthy places to live, decent housing, and secure neighbourhoods where all people feel safe and have a sense of hope and belonging in their communities and shared spaces;

⁴ And regional economic integration organizations, as appropriate.

2. CALLS ON key national policy sectors, and regional and local governments dealing with economic, labour, education, housing, communities and gender equity issues, as well as intergovernmental organizations and national and international nongovernmental organizations, including civil society and professional associations from within the health sector and beyond, to engage in and support the implementation of this resolution;
3. REQUESTS the Regional Director:
- (a) to support Member States in placing health equity at the centre of sustainable development and inclusive economies, taking into account their different capacities and levels of national development;
 - (b) to take the lead in exploring ways of bringing together policy-makers from other sectors responsible for the determinants of health, including education, housing, employment, the environment and poverty reduction, in order to develop a systematic approach to taking action;
 - (c) to provide Member States with guidance on policy options for universal and targeted policies both within the health sector and intersectorally, to be considered through whole-of-government approaches; and with the evidence and tools needed to make both a public health and an economic case for reducing inequities in health and creating conditions that are conducive to living a healthy, prosperous life;
 - (d) to launch a WHO European regional health equity solutions platform as a mechanism for policy-makers to exchange best practices and share innovations and sustainable solutions that accelerate progress towards equity in health and well-being, both nationally and at the subnational levels of regions and cities;⁵ and
 - (e) to establish, for three years, a multidisciplinary health equity alliance of scientific experts and institutions to facilitate the implementation of this resolution by generating cutting-edge evidence and methods that enable ministries of various sectors and governments to make the case for, prioritize and scale up innovations (scientific, technological, social, business or financial) in order to: increase equity

⁵ The WHO European regional health equity solutions platform will be a dedicated mechanism for countries and partner organizations to generate and implement solutions to key health equity challenges. It will establish live policy innovation sites and synthesize the best evidence and approaches that can be scaled up across the Region to accelerate progress in reducing health gaps.

in health; and ensure that the social values of solidarity, equity, well-being, inclusion and gender equality are considered and included in growth and development policies;

4. REQUESTS the Regional Office to monitor and, without imposing any additional reporting burden on Member States, report on the implementation of this resolution to the Regional Committee at its 73rd session in 2023.

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