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Resolution

**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN**

**EM/RC58/R.8
October 2011**

Fifty-eighth Session

Agenda item 4 (c)

Strategy for mental health and substance abuse in the Eastern Mediterranean Region 2012–2016

The Regional Committee,

Having discussed the technical paper on a strategy for mental health and substance abuse in the Eastern Mediterranean Region 2012–2016¹;

Recalling resolutions WHA55.10 Mental health: responding to the call for action, EM/RC52/R.5 Substance use and dependence, EM/RC53/R.5 Public health problems of alcohol consumption in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and EM/RC57/R.3 on Maternal, child and adolescent mental health: challenges and strategic approaches;

Mindful also of the World Health Reports 2001 and 2002 which highlighted the burden imposed by mental, neurological and substance use disorders, not only as discrete disorders but as independent risk factors for injuries, violence and communicable and noncommunicable diseases;

Recognizing that children and young people account for a considerable proportion of the population in the Region, that complex emergencies are prevailing in a significant number of Member States, and that the Region is undergoing rapid sociocultural transformation;

Recognizing also that mental health problems are more likely in populations exposed to the stresses of complex emergencies and economic and sociocultural changes;

Concerned at the reports showing a high burden of mental health problems among Member States and the paucity of large-scale epidemiological studies of the extent, causes and major risk factors;

Concerned also at the shortage of mental health human resources to address the burden of mental, neurological and substance use disorders in Member States of the Region;

Noting that WHO launched the Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) programme as a priority programme in 2008 and released the mhGAP intervention guide in 2010, highlighting the existence of cost-effective and evidence-based programmes to prevent and manage mental health problems;

¹ Document no. EM/RC58/5

Acknowledging the importance of investing in promotion of mental health and prevention of mental and substance use disorders for achieving the Millennium Development Goals;

1. **ENDORSES** the strategy for mental health and substance abuse in the Eastern Mediterranean Region 2012–2016;
2. **URGES** Member States to:
 - 2.1 Review and update national health policies, strategies and plans in line with the regional strategy to ensure that mental health and substance use are identified as a priority public health issue with commensurate allocation of resources;
 - 2.2 Review, develop and update mental health legislation to ensure conformity with international human rights standards;
 - 2.3 Set up a national multisectoral mechanism with the involvement of concerned ministries and relevant sectors, including civil society, with the Ministry of Health taking the lead, in order to coordinate, plan and monitor the implementation of the national mental health and substance use strategies/plans of action;
 - 2.4 Integrate and strengthen mental health and substance use prevention and care services within the existing health system, including primary health care as well as secondary and tertiary levels, ensuring a multidisciplinary approach;
 - 2.5 Promote mental health literacy and improve the teaching of mental health as a basic subject in university curricula, in order to prevent mental and substance use disorders, promote mental health, and minimize stigma and discrimination;
 - 2.6 Promote applied research and build up the capacity to undertake research in the area of mental health and substance abuse;
3. **REQUESTS** the Regional Director to:
 - 3.1 Take necessary steps to enhance regional capabilities to provide the technical support needed to the Member States;
 - 3.2 Facilitate exchange of information on successful experiences within and outside the Region and the development of networks for promotion of mental health and prevention of mental, neurological and substance use disorders; and
 - 3.3 Promote applied research and international cooperation in building up the capacity in Member States to undertake research in the area of mental health and substance abuse.