



The WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean concluded its 59th session by calling upon Member States to provide support to alleviate the suffering of refugees and internally-displaced persons in the Syrian Arab Republic and neighbouring countries. It also expressed solidarity for Afghanistan and Pakistan in their efforts to eradicate poliomyelitis and requested Member States to ensure that a 100% smoke-free policy is implemented in all public places.

Following the approval of the Regional Director's annual report for 2011, the Committee requested the Regional Director to take the necessary steps to ensure implementation of the strategic directions proposed for the next five years.

The Regional Committee, WHO's highest governing body in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, endorsed the Riyadh Declaration of the International Conference on Healthy Life styles and Noncommunicable Diseases in the Arab World and the Middle East and also endorsed the regional framework of action on the commitments of Member States to implement the recommendations of the United Nations Political Declaration on Noncommunicable Diseases.

The 59th Session of the Regional Committee concluded on 4 October 2012 in the Regional Office in Cairo.

The Regional Committee called for strengthening national health information systems by improving reporting of births, deaths, morbidity and causes of deaths, in addition to risk factors and social determinants of health.

It also called on Member States to improve quality, safety, efficacy and rational use of health

technologies, as well as rational use of medicines.

As for the International Health Regulations (IHR), the Regional Committee urged Member States to strengthen and empower national IHR focal points to enable effective performance of all core functions of the IHR and fill the gaps.

Another resolution was taken calling for further integration of eye care and prevention of avoidable blindness and visual impairment within the health care delivery system and to enhance partnerships with civil society working in the field.

The Regional Committee was invited by Tunisia to host its next session in Tunis in 2013.

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