The Regional Committee,

Recalling its own resolutions SEA/RC48/R6, SEA/RC50/R3 and SEA/RC53/R3 on alternative health care financing, health sector reform and equity in health and access to health care,

Acknowledging the need for increasing investments in health with a balanced mix of alternative health care financing options, and expressing its concerns on the high level of out-of-pocket expenditures, which would lead to impoverishment of a majority of families,

Being aware of the need to review and adopt appropriate strategies for expanding the various risk-pooling mechanisms, including social health insurance, and

Having considered the report and recommendations of the Technical Discussions on "Social Health Insurance" (SEA/RC56/17),

1. ENDORSES the recommendations contained in the report;
2. URGES Member States:
   (a) to facilitate the optimal use of available financial resources for health care by suitable financing mechanisms;
   (b) to strive for equity in access and efficiency of comprehensive health care while implementing national policies, strategies and plans for various health care financing options, and
   (c) to study and explore social health insurance as one of the alternatives for health care financing for countries which have not yet adopted it on a national scale, and
3. REQUESTS the Regional Director:
   (a) to share evidence-based information and country experiences on social health insurance and other risk-pooling mechanisms;
(b) to provide appropriate support to Member States in their efforts to introduce or expand alternative health care financing, including social health insurance schemes, in partnership with WHO collaborating centres, national centres of excellence and national expertise, and

(c) to assist Member States in capacity building in managing health care financing and policy analysis.

Sixth Meeting
12 September 2003