RESOLUTION
OF THE
WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR SOUTHWEST ASIA

SEA/RC62/R4  ENGAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN PROVIDING
HEALTH SERVICES TO MEET NATIONAL HEALTH
SYSTEMS GOALS

The Regional Committee,

Recalling World Health Assembly Resolution WHA58.33 on sustainable health financing, universal coverage and social health insurance, which calls for collaboration between public and private providers and health financing organizations to achieve universal coverage,

Recognizing the significant size of services provided by the private health sector to populations, including the poor, due to geographical proximity, flexible service hours, shorter waiting times and greater availability of medicines,

Noting with concern the wide range of private health providers, including formal and informal providers, the cost and quality of care, and that health-care provision may be influenced by a profit motive leading to overprovision of medicines, diagnostic tests and treatments, and neglect of public health functions where there is no profit potential,

Concerned that in the context of emerging and re-emerging diseases, substantial cases of notifiable diseases have been managed by the private health sector and this information is at times not reported in the national diseases surveillance system,

Noting with concern the limitations of health information systems in this Region in relation to the size, distribution, performance and other profiles of the private health sector, which serve as a foundation for appropriate policy interventions,

Concerned about the inadequate institutional capacity of regulatory and accreditation agencies responsible for overseeing the quality of care, and the limited role of health financing mechanisms in regulating public and private providers through strategic purchasing and contractual arrangements, and the potential for nongovernmental agencies in empowering consumers and reflecting their voices,

Aware that lack of trust and inadequate dialogue between the public and private health sector may result in poor human resources planning and internal “brain drain” from public to private, which undermines the provision and strengthening of essential public health services by the government,
1. URGES Member States:

(a) To assess the size and profile of private health sectors, their strengths and weaknesses, and patient and service mix, and devise policies to engage them to achieve national health system goals in the light of comparative advantages of both the public and private health sector;

(b) to assess, build up and strengthen the regulatory capacity of government licensing bodies, professional councils overseeing the quality of professionals and ethical conduct of clinical practices, insurance agencies through strategic purchasing, and health-consumer protection agencies, and to train the informal providers to ensure quality of services;

(c) to strengthen the government capacity in infrastructure and human resources planning in order to harness and synergize the role of the public and private health sectors, and improve the health information systems and disease surveillance that cover the public and private health sectors; and

(d) to accelerate the expansion of social protection and its role in reorienting public and private providers towards an optimal mix of personal care and public health interventions through strategic purchasing and contractual arrangements, including preventing out-of-pocket catastrophic health expenditure; and

2. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

(a) To convene a regional technical consultation on the health systems and policy research agenda in relation to the role of the private health sector and public-private collaboration to achieve national health goals;

(b) to compile, synthesize and disseminate lessons and good practices from developed and developing countries in harnessing the private health sector to provide health services and achieve national health systems goals;

(c) to provide technical assistance to Member States in their efforts to build up and strengthen ministries of health and other regulatory and financing agencies in order to be able to efficiently harness the contribution of the private health sector; and

(d) to collaborate with and support development partners and other stakeholders in their support for strengthening the regulatory capacity of the government and other relevant agencies in Member States in relation to the private health sector.