The Regional Committee,

Recalling World Health Assembly resolutions (WHA37.33, WHA51.17, WHA54.11 and WHA58.27) on rational use of drugs and prevention of antimicrobial resistance,

Concerned at the emergence and rapid spread of resistance in several microorganisms to the available antimicrobial agents across the South-East Asia Region, the unregulated and unauthorized availability of antimicrobial agents, irrational use of antimicrobials in medical practice and in the community, and the extensive use of antimicrobial agents for non-therapeutic purposes in the veterinary and fishery sectors, thus creating avoidable selection pressure to emergence of resistance,

Noting that antimicrobial resistance is increasingly hampering treatment of infectious diseases as a result either of totally ineffective currently available antimicrobials or of the high cost and toxic effects of newer drugs,

Aware that there is a lack of investment in the development of new antimicrobials, and that the efficacy of existing antimicrobials must therefore be preserved,

Recognizing that antimicrobial resistance in tuberculosis, malaria and human immunodeficiency virus will impede the achievement of health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),
Noting the impact of resistant organisms in the efficient utilization of modern technological and scientific advances in improving human health through complex surgeries and transplantation procedures, and the inadequacy of rational prescription and administration of antimicrobial agents,

Further noting the tendency of communities to use antimicrobial agents as a panacea for all illnesses and the poor adherence to the recommended regimen,

Aware of the international implications of the problem of resistant organisms crossing national boundaries through travel, trade and foodchains, and

Recognizing the growing public health importance of antimicrobial resistance and its increasing impact on health systems,

1. **URGES Member States:**

   (1) to encourage the development of coordination mechanisms against antimicrobial resistance and establishment of appropriate governance mechanisms to combat antimicrobial resistance;

   (2) to establish national surveillance systems for monitoring of antimicrobial resistance, use of antimicrobial agents in humans and animals and their impact on human health and economy;

   (3) to effectively enforce the legislation and regulations that counteract the manufacture, sale and distribution of substandard antimicrobial agents and prohibit the unauthorized sale of antimicrobial agents;

   (4) to work with relevant government departments in discouraging the non-therapeutic use of antimicrobial agents in the veterinary and fishery sectors;

   (5) to emphasize educational programmes for health and veterinary students and professionals to comply with the rational use of antimicrobial agents, to improve practices to prevent the spread of resistant pathogens, and to promote appropriate antimicrobial use in health-care facilities, in the community, and in animal feed production;

   (6) to strengthen infection control programmes to control infectious diseases, especially in hospital settings, in order to contain hospital-acquired infections;
(7) to support operational research on behavioural aspects and interventions to contain the irrational use of antimicrobials, and laboratory and clinical research to understand the technical dimension of antimicrobial resistance;

(8) to initiate community-awareness campaigns to solicit people’s active cooperation in the rational use of antimicrobial agents; and

2. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

(1) to assist in the development of coordination mechanisms to establish and implement sustainable national policies and strategic frameworks for rational antimicrobial use in the health and veterinary sectors;

(2) to support development of national surveillance networks, especially laboratory capacity, for monitoring antimicrobial resistance and use of antimicrobials;

(3) to facilitate sharing of knowledge and information between countries and regions, and to document best practices in combating antimicrobial resistance;

(4) to develop generic technical and educational material that can be adapted by countries in monitoring resistance and educating health professionals and communities;

(5) to collaborate with nongovernmental organizations that are engaged in containing antimicrobial resistance and bring about a synergy in their actions for the benefit of the Region;

(6) to support capacity building in research on prevention and containment of antimicrobial resistance;

(7) to compile and share evidence with Member States on the use of antimicrobial agents in animals and its impact on the emergence of antimicrobial resistance and on human health.

Fifth meeting, 10 September 2010