RESOLUTION
OF THE
WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR SOUTH-EAST ASIA

SEA/RC64/R2

STRENGTHENING OF THE COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH WORKFORCE
IN THE CONTEXT OF REVITALIZING PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

The Regional Committee,

Recalling World Health Assembly resolution WHA 62.12 on primary health care, including health system strengthening and its own resolution SEA/RC61/R3 on revitalizing primary health care (PHC),

Reaffirming the commitment for revitalizing PHC to address the emerging epidemiological and demographic transition within the socio-cultural context of Member States and the challenges faced due to climate change and rapid urbanization,

Concerned that the Region faces an increasing burden of noncommunicable diseases including mental health problems, accidents and injuries, while controlling communicable diseases and addressing maternal and child health needs requires continued attention,

Acknowledging that the community-based health workforce (particularly community health workers and volunteers) is the backbone of a PHC-based health system,

Recognizing that a well-trained, well-equipped and well-supported community-based health workforce will help in achieving universal coverage, health equity, multisectoral collaboration, and community participation, and has the potential for improving efficiency and effectiveness of the health system and contributing towards the achievement of health-related MDGs and other national and international health goals,
Noting the country initiatives in implementing the recommendations of the “Strategic directions for strengthening community-based health workers and community health volunteers in the South-East Asia Region” (SEA/HSD/311) and the opportunities and challenges for further strengthening the community-based health workforce,

Recognizing further that additional policy support is required for strengthening the community-based health workforce, and

Having considered the report and recommendations of the Technical Discussions on “Strengthening of the community-based health workforce in the context of revitalizing primary health care” (document SEA/RC64/6),

1. ENDORSES the recommendations contained in the report;
2. URGES Member States:
   (a) to review and further strengthen national health policies, including policies with specific reference to community-based health workforce and to redefine its roles to effectively address the epidemiological and demographic challenges within the socio-cultural context of the countries;
   (b) to further strengthen the skills of frontline health workers for providing comprehensive (preventive, promotive, curative and rehabilitative) health care to the community for existing and emerging health problems; and to give additional focus on building capacity to enable them to effectively function as “change agents” with emphasis on skills building for empowering the community for self-care, health promotion and disease prevention;
   (c) to urgently institute policy measures to address issues related to the management of the community-based health workforce including adoption of appropriate selection criteria; strengthening supportive supervision; rationalization of its distribution in remote as well as urban areas; incentives for retention of workers especially in remote and difficult areas; administrative and legal support; career progression and strengthening co-ordination with community-based workers of other sectors, and
   (d) to generate evidence and conduct operational research to formulate and strengthen evidence-based policy to further enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the community-based health workforce, and
3. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

(a) to advocate strengthening of national health policies, including human resources for health policies for strengthening the community-based health workforce, and support the Member States to develop appropriate mechanisms for monitoring and implementation of such policies;

(b) to facilitate exchange of information, experiences and best practices for strengthening the community-based health workforce and support collaboration and networking among Member States and institutions, and

(c) to support evidence generation, operational research and development of appropriate models to inform policy for strengthening of the community-based health workforce in the context of revitalization of PHC.

Fifth meeting, 9 September 2011