RESOLUTION
OF THE
WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR SOUTH-EAST ASIA
SEA/RC64/R5

NATIONAL ESSENTIAL DRUG POLICY INCLUDING THE RATIONAL USE
OF MEDICINES

The Regional Committee,

Recalling World Health Assembly Resolution WHA 60.16 on Progress in the Rational Use of Medicines as well as its own resolutions SEA/RC55/R4 on Accessibility to Essential Medicines and SEA/RC63/R4 on Prevention and Containment of Antimicrobial Resistance,

Concerned that irrational use of medicines continues to be an extremely serious and widespread problem in both the public and private sectors and aware that there is a lack of investment in monitoring use of medicines and promoting rational use of medicines,

Knowing that irrational use of medicines is wasteful for both patients and governments and has serious consequences in terms of poor patient outcome, increasing antimicrobial resistance, increased frequency of adverse drug reactions and events and the spread of blood-borne diseases through unsterile injections,

Wishing to promote rational use of medicines by prescribers, manufacturers and consumers,

Recognizing that the causes of irrational use of medicines are multi-factorial and may include perverse financial incentives and that a coordinated, comprehensive, national, health systems approach to promoting rational use of medicines is needed,
Aware that many Member States lack comprehensive national programmes, nor a stringent drug regulatory authority, and dedicated department/division/unit within the Ministry of Health to promote rational use of medicines, and

Noting that implementation of interventions and drug policies known to be associated with improved use of medicines is sub-optimal, and convinced that it is time for governments, health professionals, civil society, the private sector and international partners to pledge resources and act to promote rational use of medicines,

1. **URGES** Member States:

(a) to provide adequate human and financial resources to implement national strategies to promote rational use of medicines;

(b) to establish or strengthen a dedicated department/division/unit in the government/MoH, guided by a broad-based, independent, long-term, steering committee involving all relevant stakeholders, to monitor medicines use and coordinate strategies to promote rational use of medicines;

(c) to develop a national strategy and roadmap for action that takes the health system and local context into account, based on a situational analysis, to promote rational use of medicines which should include: monitoring medicines use including adverse drug reaction through a pharmacovigilance programme; using updated national clinical guidelines, essential medicines lists and formularies in all pre- and in-service training of prescribers; conducting regular government-funded continuing medical education; providing independent medicines information; establishing functional drug and therapeutic committees in all hospitals and districts; and carrying out public education on medicines use;

(d) to strengthen drug regulatory authorities particularly with regard to enforcing measures to ban unethical and misleading promotion of medicines and prevent over-the-counter sales of certain prescription-only medicines, including selected newer generation and/or other antibiotics;

(e) to develop mechanisms to minimize incentives for irrational use of medicines in the health system, such as incorporation of an Essential Medicines List into the benefit package of existing or new insurance schemes, and
(f) to develop appropriate mechanisms for weeding out irrational, fixed-dose combinations, and

2. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

(a) to develop and update a regional strategy to promote rational use of medicines;

(b) to advocate for, and facilitate the creation of, a department/division/unit for rational use of medicines in the ministries of health and the establishment of a broad-based steering committee to guide the department/division/unit;

(c) to include a component on promoting rational use of medicines in all Country Cooperation Strategies;

(d) to support Member States in mobilizing resources to promote rational use of medicine;

(e) to develop a model protocol or tool, with indicators, for undertaking a situational analysis in countries, pilot it, and adapt it so that countries may monitor their progress using the protocol or tool;

(f) to collect, share and analyze reports from the region on medicines use and drug policy to use for advocacy, and in order to monitor progress on the rational use of medicines;

(g) to provide technical support to Member States on monitoring use of medicines and implementing drug policies, and to facilitate the establishment of functional regional fora for sharing experiences and expertise on promoting rational use of medicines, for example, through meetings, training programmes, and websites, and

(h) to report biennially to Member States at the Regional Committee on progress achieved, problems encountered and further actions proposed to promote rational use of medicines.

Fifth meeting, 9 September 2011