51st DIRECTING COUNCIL

63rd SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE

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RESOLUTION

CD51.R5

STRATEGY AND PLAN OF ACTION ON *eHEALTH*

THE 51st DIRECTING COUNCIL,

Having reviewed the *Strategy and Plan of Action on eHealth* (Document CD51/13);

Recognizing that the review of the current situation indicates that the implementation of *eHealth* (using information and communication technologies in health) in the countries of the Americas hinges on two basic conditions: the existence of efficient means for formulating and implementing *eHealth* policies and strategies (technical viability) and the existence of practical and locally relevant procedures, as well as simple, affordable, and sustainable instruments (programming and financing viability);

Understanding that the objective is to improve the coordination and delivery of services in the health sector, with a view to increasing efficiency, availability, access, and affordability, thus making it possible for the sector to make adjustments and anticipate new contexts in the field of health;

Bearing in mind that the document *Health-for-all Policy for the Twenty-first Century* (1998), commissioned by WHO, recommended the appropriate use of health technologies within the general health-for-all policy and strategy; World Health Assembly resolution WHA51.9 (1998) on cross-border advertising, promotion, and sale of medical products through the Internet; the Agenda for Connectivity in the Americas and Plan of Action of Quito (2003); the United Nations World Summits on the

Information Society (Geneva, 2003; and Tunis, 2005); WHO Executive Board resolution EB115.R20 (2005) on the need to formulate *eHealth* strategies; World Health Assembly resolution WHA58.28, which established the linchpins of the WHO *eHealth* strategy; and the eLAC Strategy 2007-2010 of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC);

Considering the ample experience of the Region of the Americas in veterinary public health programs, which can also contribute to sustainable national health systems;

Noting that PAHO has collaborated with the countries of the Region to establish the conceptual underpinnings, techniques, and infrastructure necessary for developing national *eHealth* programs and policies;

Recognizing the cross-cutting nature of this strategy and its complementarity with the objectives of the PAHO Strategic Plan 2008-2012 (*Official Document 328*);

Considering the importance of having an *eHealth* strategy and plan of action in place to enable the Member States to effectively and efficiently improve public health in the Region, through the use of innovative information and communication technology tools and methodologies,

RESOLVES:

1.   To endorse the Strategy and approve the Plan of Action on *eHealth*, and support their consideration in development policies, plans, and programs, as well as in the proposals and discussions on the national budget, thereby creating the conditions to respond to the challenge of improving public health in the Region through the use of innovative information and communication technology tools and methodologies in their respective countries.

2.   To urge the Member States to:

(a)   give priority to the use of innovative information and communication technology tools and methodologies, with a view to improving human and veterinary public health in the Region, including public health administration;

(b)   prepare and implement interministerial policies, plans, programs, and interventions based on the Strategy and Plan of Action, making the necessary resources and legal framework available and focusing on the needs of at-risk populations in vulnerable situations;

(c)   execute the Strategy and Plan of Action, as appropriate, within a framework made up of the health system and information and communication technology services, emphasizing interprogrammatic collaboration and intersectoral action, while monitoring and evaluating program effectiveness and the allocation of resources;

(d)   promote greater competencies among policymakers, program managers, and health care and information and communication technology service providers, with a view to formulating policies and programs that facilitate the development of efficient, quality, and people-centered health services;

(e)   promote internal dialogue within and coordination between ministries and other public sector institutions and encourage the forging of partnerships among government, the private sector, and civil society as a means of building national consensus and facilitating the sharing of experience on cost-effective models; moreover, ensure the availability of standards for quality, safety, interoperability, and ethics, while respecting the principles of information confidentiality, equity, and equality;

(f)   support the capacity to generate information and research for the development of strategies and the implementation of pertinent evidence-based models;

(g)   establish an integrated system to monitor, evaluate, and ensure accountability for policies, plans, programs, and interventions, making it possible to increase the surveillance and rapid response capacity for diseases, as well as human and veterinary public health emergencies;

(h)   undertake reviews and internal analyses of the relevance and viability of the Strategy and Plan of Action, based on priorities, needs, and national capacity.

3.   To request to the Director to:

(a)   support coordination and implementation of the Strategy and Plan of Action on *eHealth* at the national, subregional, regional, and inter-institutional levels and facilitate technical cooperation both to and among countries for the preparation and implementation of their national plans of action;

(b)   collaborate with the Member States on the implementation and coordination of the Strategy and Plan of Action, furthering its cross-cutting nature through the program areas and different regional and subregional contexts of the Organization;

(c)   facilitate the dissemination of studies, reports, and solutions to serve as models for *eHealth*, so that, with the appropriate modifications, they can be used by the Member States;

(d)   promote the formation of national, municipal, and local partnerships with other international organizations, scientific and technical institutes, nongovernmental organizations, organized civil society, the private sector, and other entities to facilitate the sharing of capacities and resources and thus increase compatibility between different administrative, technological, and legal solutions in the area of *eHealth*;

(e)   promote coordination between the Strategy and Plan of Action and similar initiatives of other international technical cooperation and financing agencies;

(f)   report periodically to the PAHO Governing Bodies on the progress and difficulties encountered in the implementation of the Strategy and Plan of Action, as well as its adaptation to specific contexts and needs.

(Sixth meeting, 28 September 2011)