



154th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Washington, D.C., USA, 16-20 June 2014

CE154.R17
Original: English

RESOLUTION

CE154.R17

STRATEGY FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

THE 154th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,

Having reviewed the proposed *Strategy for Universal Health Coverage* (Document CE154/12),

RESOLVES:

To recommend that the Directing Council adopt a resolution along the following lines:

STRATEGY FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

THE 53rd DIRECTING COUNCIL,

Having considered the *Strategy for Universal Health Coverage* presented by the Director (Document CD53/__);

Bearing in mind that the Constitution of the World Health Organization establishes as one of its basic principles that “the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition”;

Recognizing that universal health coverage implies that all people have access, without discrimination of any kind, to nationally determined comprehensive health services (promotion, prevention, treatment, palliative care, and rehabilitation) that they need, and to safe, affordable, effective, quality medicines, while ensuring and that the use of these services does not expose users to financial hardship, in particular the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized sectors of the population;

Recognizing that policies and interventions that address the social determinants of health and foster the commitment of society as a whole to promote health and well-being, with an emphasis on groups in conditions of poverty and vulnerability, are an essential requirement to advance toward universal health coverage;

Recognizing that universal health coverage is framed by the values and principles of primary health care in the spirit of Alma Ata;

Observing that the countries of the Region reaffirmed their commitment to universal health coverage at the 52nd PAHO Directing Council (2013) by approving the PAHO Strategic Plan 2014-2019, and through their active participation in other international forums such as the Rio Political Declaration on Social Determinants of Health (2011), the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (2012), United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/67/81 (December 2012), and the World Health Assembly resolution WHA67.14 (2014) on health in the post-2015 development agenda, which proposes universal health coverage and the unmet Millennium Development Goals as important factors for equity and human development in the post-2015 development agenda;

Noting the recent improvements achieved in health throughout the Americas due in part to the economic and social development of the countries, the consolidation of democratic processes, the strengthening of health systems, and the political commitment of countries to address the health needs of their populations;

Recognizing that despite the advances made, major challenges exist; that the Region remains the most inequitable in the world; that the process of reducing health inequities is made more complex by the new epidemiological and demographic patterns that require different and innovative responses from health systems and services; and that problems of exclusion and lack of access to quality services persist for large sectors of the population in the Region, especially those groups in conditions of greatest vulnerability;

Observing that the efforts to strengthen and transform health systems in the countries of the Region have generated considerable knowledge and experience that will facilitate continued progress toward universal health coverage;

Recognizing that advancing toward universal health coverage requires efforts to overcome exclusion, inequity, and barriers to access and to the timely use of comprehensive health services;

Considering the importance of strengthening health systems and adopting integrated, inclusive policies to protect health and to address the social determinants of health for achieving universal health coverage; and also bearing in mind that the Constitution of the World Health establishes as one of its basic principles that “the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of

every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition”;

Recognizing the importance of prioritizing the strengthening of health systems, with universal health coverage as the general objective, in order to address inequities in access to health;

Observing that the Strategy defines the essential conditions that will allow countries to focus their policies and measure the success and progress toward universal health coverage;

Recognizing that each country should define its own path towards universal health coverage, taking into account its social, economic, political, legal, historical, and cultural context;

Recognizing the participatory process implemented for the development of the Strategy, including national consultations by the Member States in coordination with the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, and subregional and regional consultations coordinated by the Bureau and the country working groups,

RESOLVES:

1. To adopt the *Strategy for Universal Health Coverage*.
2. To urge the Member States, as appropriate to their context and their domestic priorities, to:
 - a) establish formal mechanisms for participation and dialogue to promote the development and implementation of inclusive policies, and ensure accountability in moving toward universal health coverage;
 - b) establish national targets and goals, and define their respective roadmaps toward universal health coverage; set national priorities for the period 2014-2019, in accordance with the commitments established in the PAHO Strategic Plan and the Twelfth WHO General programme of work (2014-2019);
 - c) define and implement a set of actions to strengthen the governance and stewardship capacity of the health sector; exercise leadership to impact on policies, plans, legislation, regulations, and actions beyond the health sector that address the determinants of health;
 - d) advance toward providing universal access to comprehensive and inclusive health services that are consistent with health needs, system capacities, and the national context; identify the unmet and differentiated needs of the population as well as specific needs of groups in conditions of vulnerability;

- e) define and implement actions to improve the organization and management of health services through the development of health care models that focus on the needs of people and communities, increasing response capacity at the primary level of care through integrated health services networks;
 - f) improve human resource capacity at the first level of care, increasing employment opportunities with attractive labor conditions and incentives, particularly in underserved areas; consolidate collaborative multidisciplinary health teams; ensure that these teams have access to health information and telehealth services (including telemedicine); introduce new professional and technical profiles coherent with the model of comprehensive care services;
 - g) increase efficiency and public financing of health, as appropriate, noting that in most cases, public expenditure of 6% of GDP is a useful benchmark and that these resources should be allocated, as appropriate, on a priority basis to the primary level of care to expand the supply of quality services and quickly address unmet health needs;
 - h) advance toward eliminating or avoiding significant direct payment at the point of service, replacing it on a planned basis by pooled contributions based on taxes and other sources of financing, in order to avoid barriers to access, catastrophic expenditure, and the impoverishment of individuals as a result of seeking the care they need;
 - i) identify and implement a set of actions to improve the efficiency of health system financing and organization;
 - j) implement programs for the empowerment of people and communities, including promotion, prevention, and education activities that enable individuals and the community to know more about their health situation, their rights, responsibilities, and the social determinants of health.
3. To request the Director to:
- a) use the Strategy to facilitate the leadership of the health authorities in order to promote the mobilization of national resources to support the transformation or strengthening of health systems toward universal health coverage;
 - b) prioritize technical cooperation that supports countries in the development of participatory processes to define targets and national goals, as well as action plans to advance toward universal health coverage;
 - c) measure the progress toward universal health coverage using the indicators identified in the Strategic Plan 2014-2019 and report on the advances through the biennial assessment reports on the implementation of the Strategic Plan;

- d) develop actions and tools to support the implementation of the Strategy;
- e) promote innovation in technical cooperation in health system transformation or strengthening toward universal health coverage, updating the Bureau's mechanisms to support cooperation among countries, establishing expert and knowledge management networks, facilitating the documentation and communication of country experiences, and making use of technological platforms, in a manner consistent with country needs and current capacities, and the lessons learned;
- f) strengthen interagency coordination and collaboration mechanisms to achieve synergies and efficiency in technical cooperation, including within the United Nations System, the Inter-American System, and with other stakeholders working toward universal health coverage, in particular with subregional integration mechanisms and relevant international financial institutions.

(Tenth meeting, 20 June 2014)