

The Regional Committee,

Having studied with interest the paper on Health of the Elderly and Problems of the Handicapped Elderly;\*

Noting with concern the problems associated with the rapid increase in the number of elderly persons of 60 years and above, as well as their proportion of the total population in all countries in the Region, and that the existing health care system is, in most cases, unable to meet the special needs of the elderly population;

Recognizing that this demographic trend will come into sharper focus in coming years with the increasing application of medical and health sciences leading to rapid reduction of mortality rates in all age-groups, complemented by falling birth rates;

Noting with considerable interest the results of the cross-national epidemiological survey on the health and social status of the elderly population in Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan and Tunisia, presented at the recently held EMRO Consultation on Health Care of the Elderly, and realizing their implications for the formulation of national strategies;

Further, noting with concern that no organized efforts have yet been made in most countries of this Region in planning and implementing a programme for the protection of the elderly population, a large segment of whom are vulnerable to all types of health hazards leading to disability and handicap, in many cases;

1. URGES Member States to:

- 1.1 establish and strengthen an appropriate national intersectoral set-up for coordinating all activities relating to protection of the elderly, sponsoring measures in important areas which have not yet been covered, and eventually to formulate an overall national policy;
- 1.2 conduct situation analysis for rapidly assessing the size and socioeconomic character of the elderly population in the country, their health status and existing measures in both the public and private sectors for their protection;
- 1.3 formulate national strategies for the protection of the elderly with special reference to the prevention of disability and handicap;
- 1.4 identify a training centre, preferably in one country of the Region, to assist Member States in their efforts to develop appropriate training programmes for health care of the elderly;
- 1.5 encourage research in related areas of operational importance;

2. REQUESTS the Regional Director to:

- 2.1 assist the national set-up of Member States responsible for health of the elderly in conducting situation analysis followed by formulation of national programmes for health protection of the elderly, and implementing a need-based training programme for workers in various sectors and at various level of programme operations;
- 2.2 enable national managers of such programmes to exchange experiences through intercountry workshops thereby strengthening national capability in the implementation of programmes and in conducting operational research;
- 2.3 formulate a Regional Strategy on Health Care of the Elderly in collaboration with the Member States.