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**RESOLUTION**

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**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE  
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN**

**EM/RC54/R.4  
October 2007**

**Fifty-fourth Session**

**Agenda item 6 (c)**

**Growing threat of viral haemorrhagic fevers in the Eastern Mediterranean Region:  
a call for action**

The Regional Committee,

Having reviewed the technical paper on the growing threat of viral haemorrhagic fevers in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: a call for action<sup>1</sup>;

Recalling resolutions EM/RC50/R.11 Main challenges in the control of zoonotic diseases in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, and EM/RC52/R.6 Integrated vector management;

Recognizing that viral haemorrhagic fevers constitute public health emergencies of international concern according to the International Health Regulations 2005;

Noting that all Member States are at risk for different viral haemorrhagic fevers and that no country in the Region is immune from these diseases;

Recognizing the disparities between Member States with regard to epidemiological and laboratory capacities for diagnosing viral haemorrhagic fevers, and the importance of sharing experience between countries and making use of other global and regional resources through networking;

Recognizing the added threat posed by epidemic-prone emerging diseases that affect animal resources to countries where livestock trade constitutes the main source of national income;

1. **ENDORSES** the strategic directions outlined in the paper;
2. **URGES** Member States to:
  - 2.1 Develop national preparedness plans for early detection of and timely response to emerging outbreaks of viral haemorrhagic fevers that emphasize partnerships with veterinary and entomological services, timely sharing of information and institution of joint control activities;
  - 2.2 Develop advocacy programmes to increase public awareness and secure further political commitment to strengthen and maintain prevention and control of viral haemorrhagic fevers;

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<sup>1</sup> Document no. EM/RC54/5

- 2.3 Support establishment of a network of national and regional centres of excellence with competent epidemiological and laboratory capacities capable of confirming early diagnosis and characterization of viral haemorrhagic fevers;
  - 2.4 Promote formative research studies for risk assessment to identify risk behaviour and practices that influence transmission of viral haemorrhagic fevers, animal reservoirs and their economic impact in order to inform culturally appropriate behavioural interventions and messages;
  - 2.5 Initiate, strengthen and/or promote implementation of adequate infection control practices in health settings;
  - 2.6 Ensure that urban areas are free from *Aedes aegypti*, especially at points of entry and during major religious congregations, to interrupt transmission of dengue fever, through strong vector control surveillance, use of effective insecticides and other appropriate control measures;
  - 2.7 Develop national strategies and action plans to ensure full coverage with yellow fever vaccination, where applicable;
  - 2.8 Develop a feasible integrated surveillance system for viral haemorrhagic fevers that involves different disciplines within ministries of health, agriculture, animal resources and other related zoonotic, behavioural, meteorological and environmental risk factors;
3. **REQUESTS** the Regional Director to:
- 3.1 Continue to provide technical support to Member States to strengthen epidemiological and laboratory surveillance and response and infection control capacity;
  - 3.2 Continue to support relevant research activities in the field of viral haemorrhagic fevers.