Organisation mondiale de la Santé
BUREAU RÉGIONAL DE LA Méditerranée orientale

World Health Organization
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE Eastern Mediterranean

منظمة الصحة العالمية
المكتب الإقليمي لشرق المتوسط

قـــرار

Resolution

REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN **EM/RC67/R.2**
October 2020

Sixty-seventh session
Agenda item 4(a)

Regional strategy to improve access to medicines and vaccines in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2020–2030, including lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic

The Regional Committee,

Having discussed the technical paper on the regional strategy to improve access to medicines and vaccines in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2020–2030, including lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic;[1]

Acknowledging the achievements made by several Member States to ensure access to essential medicines and vaccines, and the support provided by multiple international and regional technical and financial institutions and alliances;

Deeply concerned about the persistent challenges undermining access to safe, effective, high-quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines, and the additional direct and indirect negative impacts imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic;

Keenly aware that the circulation of falsified or otherwise substandard medicines, vaccines and medical products is a widespread problem in the Region;

Recognizing the need to develop mechanisms that ensure equitable and fair distribution of COVID-19 tools, including diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines, and to strengthen health systems to ensure their effective delivery;

Recalling regional resolutions EM/RC33/R.10 (1986) on the rational use of drugs, EM/RC33/R.9 (1986) on registration of herbal medicines, EM/RC49/R.9 (2002) on traditional medicine, EM/RC44/R.3 (1997) on appropriate health technology, EM/RC45/R.5 (1998) on regional self-reliance in the production of essential drugs and vaccines, EM/RC47/R.7 (2000) on the implications of GATT and WTO agreements on health in general, EM/RC49/R.10 on antimicrobial resistance and rational use of antimicrobial agents, EM/RC51/R.10 (2004) on vaccine development, accessibility and availability, EM/RC53/R.12 (2006) on regional guidelines on stability testing of active substances and pharmaceutical products, and EM/RC54/R.8 (2007) on medicine prices and access to medicines in the Eastern Mediterranean Region;

[1] EM/RC67/6.

Building on resolution WHA73.1 on COVID-19 response and United Nations General Assembly resolutions A/RES/74/270 on global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and A/RES/74/274 on international cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19;

Acknowledging that access to essential medicines and vaccines is part of the human right to health and an essential component of the Sustainable Development Goals and SDG target 3.8 on universal health coverage;

1. **ENDORSES** the regional strategy to improve access to medicines and vaccines in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2020–2030;

2. **URGES** Member States to:

   2.1 Use the regional strategy to improve access to medicines and vaccines in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2020–2030, as a guide for action to ensure the availability of medicines and vaccines, including medicines and vaccines for COVID-19, of high quality in line with national medicines and immunization policies, and for collaboration with WHO;

   2.2 Secure, within national priorities, sufficient domestic public funding for essential medicines and vaccines through improved public financial management; and employ innovative revenue-raising mechanisms to mobilize additional domestic and external resources for essential medicines and vaccines, while enhancing value for money by assuring competitive and fair prices and rational use;

   2.3 Strengthen national regulatory systems and national capacities for regulating medicines and vaccines, including: marketing authorization, pricing, import control, clinical trials oversight, pharmacovigilance including adverse events following immunization, licensing activities, regulatory inspections, laboratory testing including quality control and lot release, and market surveillance and control including for substandard and falsified products;

   2.4 Use evidence-based approaches to review national essential medicines lists and national vaccination schedules, to ensure the availability of cost-effective medicines and vaccines as part of publicly financed benefit packages, acknowledging that this implies the establishment and strengthening of an independent health technology assessment agency/function and national immunization technical advisory groups;

   2.5 Review medicine and vaccine procurement systems and supply chains, as common goods for health, to ensure the procurement of quality-assured products at the most affordable price, including in the context of COVID-19 and other outbreaks, pandemics or crises;

   2.6 Promote local production of quality-assured medicines, including generic medicines, and vaccines to meet public health needs by developing an enabling business and regulatory environment and providing incentives for these commodities to address the shortages of medicine and vaccines, ensuring quality and competitive pricing; and using existing mechanisms for voluntary pooling and licensing of patents in accordance with the provisions of relevant international treaties including the TRIPS Agreement and its flexibilities as per the Doha Declaration;

   2.7 Invest in the establishment of a regional pooled procurement/joint purchasing arrangement for vaccines and specific types of essential medicines, including biosimilars;

   2.8 Establish partnerships and improve collaboration and information exchange with international and national partners, other countries and all stakeholders, including industry and research institutions;

3. **REQUESTS** the Regional Director to:

3.1 Support Member States to develop national strategic and operational plans to improve access to medicines and vaccines, guided by the regional strategy;

3.2 Establish a regional technical advisory group to provide recommendations on measures to improve access to essential medicines and vaccines in the Region; explore and advise on innovative mechanisms, such as pooled procurement, to improve access; and support the use of relevant indicators for measuring access to essential medicines and vaccines;

3.3 Assist national regulatory authorities in strengthening their regulatory systems to secure an efficient supply management system, as a common good for health, while ensuring good manufacturing practice requirements for local production of medicines and vaccines to meet quality standards;

3.4 Support assessments of the pharmaceutical sector and implementation of regular monitoring and evaluation systems to measure the impact of interventions on access, quality and proper use of medicines and vaccines;

3.5 Report on progress made in implementing the regional strategy to the 69th and 71st sessions of the Regional Committee, and present a full mid-term implementation report to the 73rd session.