

53rd DIRECTING COUNCIL

66th SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF WHO FOR THE AMERICAS

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RESOLUTION

CD53.R12

PLAN OF ACTION ON DISABILITIES AND REHABILITATION

THE 53rd DIRECTING COUNCIL,

Having reviewed the *Plan of Action on Disabilities and Rehabilitation* (Document CD53/7, Rev. 1);

Recognizing that the prevalence and incidence of disabilities are growing, due, among other things, to the aging of the population, the rise in chronic diseases and their risk factors, substance abuse, occupational and traffic injuries, and violence and humanitarian crises;

Recognizing that disability is a public health issue, a human rights issue, and a development priority;

Understanding that persons with disabilities have worse health outcomes when compared with the disability-free population, and that they face stigma and barriers to service access;

Recognizing that community-based rehabilitation and the availability of human and material resources contribute to comprehensive, quality care and the protection of the human rights of persons with disabilities;

Understanding that investing in habilitation and rehabilitation, as well as in social and health services and in the provision of cost-effective assistive technology is important for enabling persons with disabilities to live an independent life and integrate with their families and communities, and that it helps reduce the need for formal support services and relieve the physical and psychological burden on caregivers;

Considering that Resolution CD47.R1 (2006), *Disability: Prevention and Rehabilitation in the Context of the Right to the Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health and Other Related Rights* urges the Member States to draft and adopt policies, plans, and laws on health, habilitation, and rehabilitation consistent with the applicable international human rights instruments;

Considering that, in May 2014, the Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly approved the *WHO Global disability action plan 2014-2021: Better health for all people with disabilities* (resolution WHA67.7), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), with the consensus of its Member States, drafted this plan of action aligned with the global action plan and the PAHO Strategic Plan 2014-2019;

Observing that this plan of action addresses the objectives essential for meeting the countries' needs, in accordance with their national context,

RESOLVES:

1. To approve the *Plan of Action on Disabilities and Rehabilitation* and its implementation within the context of the particular conditions of each country.
2. To urge the Member States, taking into account the shared responsibilities in federated States, to:
 - a) make disability a priority in their national health policies to ensure implementation of the respective plans leading to universal, equitable access by persons with disabilities and their families to health services and programs that include habilitation and rehabilitation, the provision of assistive technology, and other support throughout the life course;
 - b) strengthen the legal framework and regulations in the countries and their enforcement to protect the human rights of persons with disabilities, pursuant to the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Inter-American Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, and the applicable international standards;
 - c) support civil society involvement in activities to promote and protect the health of persons with disabilities, ensuring that they are consulted through their representative organizations and can actively participate in policy-making and the drafting of legislation, as well as the creation of the respective services;
 - d) strengthen the community-based rehabilitation strategy in integrated service networks by broadening activities for disability prevention and detection, early intervention, access to assistive technology, and other support;
 - e) continue efforts to shift the hospital-based disability care model to a community-based model in which treatment is provided at the primary health care

- level and decentralized outpatient rehabilitation services are set up close to the population;
- f) ensure a health and social service response suited to the particular characteristics of groups in conditions of vulnerability or with special needs that have disabilities;
 - g) consider the upgrading and regular training of human resources a key component for improving the health service response;
 - h) improve the equipment and infrastructure of health care services for persons with disabilities;
 - i) improve the production, analysis, and use of disability data in national information systems and apply valid tools consistent with the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health;
 - j) support research and the evaluation of public policies in the field of disability;
 - k) adopt an effective multisectoral approach that includes mechanisms for coordinating ministries, NGOs, academic institutions, and other services for persons with disabilities;
 - l) protect the health of caregivers who assist persons with disabilities, whether family members or professionals, in the performance of essential duties;
 - m) promote the sharing of experiences and good practices among countries.
3. To request the Director to:
- a) strengthen PAHO cooperation with the Member States to promote and protect the quality of life of persons with disabilities and their enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health;
 - b) assist the Member States with the preparation, review, and implementation of national disability and rehabilitation plans and the updating of laws;
 - c) collaborate in evaluations of country habilitation and rehabilitation programs and services, especially by monitoring indicators, to evaluate progress and the impact of the interventions;
 - d) help the Member States improve their health information systems to produce, analyze, and utilize disability data that meet the criteria of quality, timeliness, and reliability;
 - e) foster partnerships with international organizations and other regional and subregional entities to support the multisectoral response needed to implement this plan of action;
 - f) facilitate information dissemination and the sharing of experiences and good practices, in addition to promoting technical cooperation among the Member States;

- g) facilitate the Member States' collaboration with teaching institutions and nongovernmental organizations, especially organizations of persons with disabilities and others that promote protection and respect for persons with disabilities.

(Eighth meeting, 2 October 2014)