

53rd DIRECTING COUNCIL

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

Washington, D.C., USA, 29 September-3 October 2014

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RESOLUTION

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PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

THE 53rd DIRECTING COUNCIL,

Having reviewed the *Plan of Action for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance* (Document CD53/12);

Recognizing that the countries of the Region of the Americas have increased their ability to respond with their own human and material resources to emergencies and disasters, but that when events of greater magnitude occur, international assistance continues to be necessary to complement the efforts of the affected country;

Understanding that humanitarian assistance requires that adequate mechanisms of national and international coordination be established to ensure that interventions are carried out according to agreed international humanitarian standards, including medical care and public health interventions, respecting the culture and customs of the affected countries;

Recognizing that disasters can accentuate existing inequalities and inequities, and that actions that strengthen the capacities for coordination of assistance make it possible to include aspects such as the protection of vulnerable groups, gender equity, and the identification of cultural needs or specific needs of ethnic groups;

Considering that the Humanitarian Reform process and the Transformative Agenda of the United Nations, as well as resolutions CD45.R8 (2004) and CSP28.R19 (2012) of PAHO/WHO and WHA65.20 (2012) of WHO, all urge that steps be taken to

improve coordination among the different actors that work in emergency response, with a view to optimizing the responsiveness and accountability of international cooperation;

Recognizing the unique and central role of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in coordinating international humanitarian action, and taking into due consideration the role of national disaster management authorities;

Recognizing that the Strategic Plan of the Pan American Health Organization 2014-2019 and the Program and Budget 2014-2015, approved by the 52nd Directing Council of PAHO, call for the countries to have a coordination mechanism for health emergencies that meets the minimum requirements for satisfactory performance;

Recognizing the complexity and crucial role of the health sector in its response at the onset of a disaster or emergency, and recognizing that coordination of international health assistance could be better reflected in existing national and international multisectoral mechanisms;

Considering the importance of having a plan of action that strengthens the health sector in Member States and increases their ability to effectively and efficiently improve coordination of the receipt and provision of health-related humanitarian assistance in emergencies and disasters, with a view to saving the greatest possible number of lives and protecting the health of the affected population,

RESOLVES:

1. To approve the *Plan of Action for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance* and promote its consideration in development policies, plans, and programs, as well as in proposals and discussions on national budgets.
2. To urge the Member States to:
 - a) participate in the formation of a regional advisory group of a temporary nature;
 - b) participate in the health network for emergencies and disasters in the Americas, and promote and facilitate the incorporation into this network of the bilateral and multilateral cooperation activities in health that are currently underway in the Region;
 - c) to consider implementing, as appropriate according to United Nations rules and in coordination with existing national disaster risk management authorities, a flexible mechanism for registry of qualified foreign medical teams and multidisciplinary health teams, and emergency response procedures in the Americas;

- d) facilitate and cooperate in the interconnection of health-related logistical systems in the Americas for a network to facilitate humanitarian health assistance in the Region;
 - e) promote the implementation of mechanisms for coordination with other sectors;
 - f) promote and facilitate the training of their human resources for emergencies and disasters.
3. To request the Director to:
- a) support the coordination and implementation of the Plan of Action in order to coordinate humanitarian assistance in the international sphere and provide necessary technical cooperation to countries;
 - b) facilitate and promote the creation of a flexible mechanism for registry of qualified foreign medical teams and multidisciplinary health teams, and emergency response procedures in the Americas, in coordination with WHO and OCHA, and in accordance with WHO guidelines;
 - c) facilitate the formation of a temporary regional advisory group with experts from the countries in order to review, harmonize, update, and disseminate procedures and mechanisms for humanitarian assistance in health in the Region;
 - d) serve as the secretariat of the above-mentioned regional advisory group;
 - e) promote the formation of alliances among countries, with regional integration forums, international agencies, scientific and technical institutions, nongovernmental organizations, organized civil society, the private sector, and others, in order to further enhance the capacity of Member States to respond to health emergencies.

(Seventh meeting, 2 October 2014)