

## **WHA54.12 Strengthening nursing and midwifery**

The Fifty-fourth World Health Assembly,

Having reviewed the report on strengthening nursing and midwifery; <sup>i</sup>

Recalling resolutions WHA42.27, WHA45.5, WHA47.9, WHA48.8 and WHA49.1 which recommended action aimed at strengthening nursing and midwifery;

Recognizing the importance of accessible health systems in efforts to improve the health of populations, as highlighted in *The world health report 2000*; <sup>ii</sup>

Recognizing the importance of using appropriate resources, including human resources, in the provision of health services;

Aware that nurses and midwives play a crucial and cost-effective role in reducing excess mortality, morbidity and disability and in promoting healthy lifestyles, and concerned that further action is needed to maximize their contribution;

Concerned about global shortages of nurses and midwives;

Recognizing the importance of nursing services and midwifery services <sup>iii</sup> as the core of any health system and in national health;

Mindful of the continuing need to work with the full range of partners whose work impacts on the health of the population, on health promotion and on health care,

### 1. URGES Member States:

- (1) to further the development of their health systems and to pursue health sector reform by involving nurses and midwives in the framing, planning and implementation of health policy at all levels;
- (2) to review or develop and implement national action plans for health and models of education, legislation, regulation and practice for nurses and midwives, and to ensure that these adequately and appropriately reflect competencies and knowledge that enable nurses and midwives to meet the needs of the population they serve;
- (3) to establish comprehensive programmes for the development of human resources which support the training, recruitment and retention of a skilled and motivated nursing and midwifery workforce within health services;
- (4) to develop and implement policies and programmes which ensure healthy workplaces and quality of the work environment for nurses and midwives;
- (5) to underpin the above measures through continuing assessment of nursing and midwifery needs and by developing, reviewing regularly, and implementing national action plans for nursing and midwifery, as an integral part of national health policy;
- (6) to enhance the development of nursing and midwifery services that reduce risk factors and respond to health needs, on the basis of sound scientific and clinical evidence;

## RESOLUTIONS AND DECISIONS

- (7) to prepare plans for evaluating nursing services;
2. REQUESTS the Director-General:
- (1) to provide support to Member States in setting up mechanisms for inquiry into the global shortage of nursing and midwifery personnel, including the impact of migration, and in developing human resources plans and programmes, including ethical international recruitment;
- (2) to provide support to Member States in their efforts to strengthen the contribution of nurses and midwives to the health of the populations and to take the necessary measures to increase the number of WHO collaborating centres for nursing and midwifery in developing countries;
- (3) to ensure the involvement of nursing and midwifery experts in the integrated planning of human resources for health and in health planning in general, and to provide support to Member States undertaking programmes for skilled village birth attendants by developing guidelines and training modules, thus expanding the role of nurses and in particular midwives;
- (4) to continue to cooperate with governments to promote effective coordination between all agencies and organizations concerned with the development of nursing and midwifery;
- (5) to provide continuing support for the work of the Global Advisory Group on Nursing and Midwifery, and to take account of the interest and contribution of nursing and midwifery in wider aspects of the development and implementation of WHO's policy and programmes;
- (6) to develop and implement systems and uniform performance indicators at country, regional and global levels to monitor, measure, and report progress in achieving these goals;
- (7) to prepare rapidly a plan of action for the strengthening of nursing and midwifery and to provide for external evaluation at the conclusion thereof;
- (8) to keep the Health Assembly informed of progress made in the implementation of this resolution, and to report to the Fifty-sixth World Health Assembly in 2003.

(Ninth plenary meeting, 21 May 2001 –  
Committee A, fourth report)

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<sup>i</sup> Document A54/11.

<sup>ii</sup> *The world health report 2000: health systems: improving performance*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2000.

<sup>iii</sup> and officially recognized equivalent staff providing those services.