Progress reports on selected Regional Committee resolutions

The High-Level Preparatory Meeting for the Seventy-sixth Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia, held virtually in New Delhi on 4–5 September 2023, reviewed the progress reports on the following selected Regional Committee resolutions:

1. South-East Asia Regional Action Plan to implement the Global Strategy to reduce harmful use of alcohol 2014–2025 (SEA/RC67/R4);
2. Challenges in polio eradication (SEA/RC60/R8);
3. COVID-19 and measures to ‘build back better’ essential health services to achieve universal health coverage and the health-related SDGs (SEA/RC74/R1);
4. South-East Asia Regional Health Emergency Fund (SEARHEF) (SEA/RC60/R7), and Expanding the scope of the South-East Asia Regional Health Emergency Fund (SEARHEF) (SEA/RC69/R6);
5. Regional commitment on TB: Political Declaration on TB by the UN High-Level Meeting and preparing a follow-up plan in the SE Asia Region (SEA/RC70/R4);
6. Promoting physical activity in the South-East Asia Region (SEA/RC69/R4); and
7. Revitalizing the school health programme and health-promoting schools in the SE Asia Region (SEA/RC74/R3).

The recommendations made by the High-Level Preparatory Meeting on each of these progress reports, as contained in this document (Addendum 1) are being submitted to the Seventy-sixth Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia for its consideration.
Introduction

1. The High-Level Preparatory Meeting for the Seventy-sixth Session of the Regional Committee for South-East Asia held virtually on 4–5 September 2023 reviewed the progress reports on the following selected Regional Committee resolutions:

   i. South-East Asia Regional Action Plan to implement the Global Strategy to reduce harmful use of alcohol 2014–2025 (SEA/RC67/R4);
   
   ii. Challenges in polio eradication (SEA/RC60/R8);
   
   iii. COVID-19 and measures to “build back better” essential health services to achieve universal health coverage and the health-related SDGs (SEA/RC74/R1);
   
   iv. South-East Asia Regional Health Emergency Fund (SEARHEF) (SEA/RC60/R7), and Expanding the scope of the South-East Asia Regional Health Emergency Fund (SEARHEF) (SEA/RC69/R6);
   
   v. Regional commitment on TB: Political Declaration on TB by the UN High-Level Meeting and preparing a follow-up plan in the SE Asia Region (SEA/RC70/R4);
   
   vi. Promoting physical activity in the South-East Asia Region (SEA/RC69/R4); and
   
   vii. Revitalizing the school health programme and health-promoting schools in the SE Asia Region (SEA/RC74/R3).

2. The recommendations made by the High-Level Preparatory Meeting on each of these progress reports as enumerated hereinafter are submitted to the Seventy-sixth Session of the WHO Regional Committee for its consideration.

1. South-East Asia Regional Action Plan to implement the Global Strategy to reduce harmful use of alcohol 2014–2025 (SEA/RC67/R4)

Recommendations

*Actions by Member States*

(1) Strengthen the implementation and enforcement of the most cost-effective alcohol control measures – comprehensive ban on advertising, sponsorships and other promotions; raising prices through optimal taxation; restricting accessibility; drink-driving countermeasures; improving access to screening, brief interventions and treatment services.

(2) Collaborate further with relevant sectors such as finance, social services, education, justice and law enforcement to effectively implement the policy measures currently adopted in each Member State.

(3) Strengthen in-country mechanisms for initiatives to address the issue of production, distribution, sale and consumption of home-brewed and other types of illicit alcohol including cross-border smuggling.
**Actions by WHO**

1. Provide technical support to Member States to address alcohol industry interference when developing and implementing policies, in a context-sensitive manner, at the national and subnational levels.

2. Advocate for and continue provision of technical support to develop or update national and subnational policies and regulations to effectively implement measures of the Regional Action Plan to address the existing gaps in alcohol control in Member States.

3. Provide support for research on alcohol taxation, economic and social costs of alcohol, associations between alcohol and suicide, alcohol and poverty, and intervention research on delaying onset of use.

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2. Challenges in polio eradication [SEA/RC60/R8]

**Recommendations**

**Actions by Member States**

1. Continue to maintain commitment on the part of governments to sustain high levels of routine immunization coverage with both bOPV and IPV, introduce IPV2 as per SAGE recommendations, and rapidly achieve high IPV2 coverage, maintain a sensitive surveillance system and a strong outbreak response capacity as well as the containment of polioviruses in facilities.

2. Ensure long-term sustainability of polio infrastructure through domestic/alternative funding resources to maintain the gains over polio, and to achieve other public health goals.

**Actions by WHO**

1. Provide technical support to Member States in maintaining the polio-free status of the Region.

2. Provide technical support for polio risk assessments and outbreak preparedness and response in countries of the Region.

3. Finalize the Regional Strategic Plan for polio transition with the goal of protecting investments in polio eradication.

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3. COVID-19 and measures to ‘build back better’ essential health services to achieve universal health coverage and the health-related SDGs [SEA/RC74/R1]

**Recommendations**

**Action by Member States**

1. Ensure sustained support to the Ministerial Declaration on “COVID-19 and measures to ‘build back better’”.

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**Actions by WHO**

1. Update this first progress report, with inputs from additional submissions from Member States and suggestions made at the HLP Meeting.

2. Provide focused support to Member States for operationalizing comprehensive PHC, particularly in the following four areas: integration of essential public health functions and essential health services; strengthening PHC teams; prioritizing strategic health investments to address health inequities; and leveraging digital health and technologies for people-centred health services.

3. Continue to monitor progress on the Ministerial Declaration on “COVID-19 and measures to ‘build back better’”.

4. (a) South-East Asia Regional Health Emergency Fund (SEARHEF) (SEA/RC60/R7), and (b) Expanding the scope of the South-East Asia Regional Health Emergency Fund (SEA/RC69/R6)

   **Recommendations:**

   **Action by Member States**

   1. Support the proposed expansion of the SEARHEF corpus from US$ 1 million to US$ 3 million.

   **Actions by WHO**

   1. The Regional Office should consider the inclusion of a substantive Agenda item for the Regional Committee Session on expanding the scope of the SEARHEF corpus and table it for the Committee’s consideration.

   2. Continue to work closely with the members of the Working Group on expanding the scope of SEARHEF, as discussed during the 12th Meeting of the Working Group on SEARHEF.

5. Regional commitment on TB: Political Declaration on TB by the UN High-Level Meeting and preparing a follow-up plan in the SE Asia Region (SEA/RC70/R4)

   **Recommendations**

   **Actions by Member States**

   1. Constitute multisectoral coordination mechanisms, in alignment with the Gandhinagar Declaration of August 2023, that report to the highest political level for monitoring progress towards ending TB and priority communicable diseases.

   2. Harness science and technology and improve access that is equitable and human rights-based through an integrated, primary health care approach.
(3) Allocate the necessary resources to meet TB service coverage targets and address social determinants to have multidisease impact, achieve the targets of universal health coverage and promote pandemic preparedness.

**Actions by WHO**

(1) Extend all support to the implementation of the Gandhinagar Declaration of August 2023 and the Political Declaration from the UN High-Level Meeting on TB in September 2023 by contextualizing the commitments into regional and country-specific targets.

(2) Provide continued technical support to Member States for adopting new tools, technologies and drugs for TB.

(3) Provide strategic guidance for addressing the social determinants of TB and for setting up integrated approaches to address multiple priority diseases.

6. **Promoting physical activity in the South-East Asia Region (SEA/RC69/R4)**

**Recommendations**

**Actions by Member States**

(1) Develop strategies and plans to include the promotion of physical activity into PHC service delivery as a standard component of programmes (antenatal and postnatal care, child and adolescent health, NCD services and elderly care, among others).

(2) Further support pre-school and school settings as effective platforms to promote and establish context-specific, sustainable physical activity programmes.

(3) Prioritize regulatory and other policies to create enabling environments for physical activity, as lack of enabling environments is a significant impediment to the promotion of physical activity in urban areas.

**Actions by WHO**

(1) Share good practices in the promotion of physical activity, including the creation of enabling environments, which can guide Member States to adapt such practices to their contexts.

(2) Support Member States to invest in improved data systems to monitor progress and identify roadblocks.

(3) Finalize the country profiles on physical activity, which would also include all available data on physical activity.

(4) Continue to support Member States to promote physical activity through assessments of national policy coherence, capacity-building, and creating a community of practice for information-sharing.
7. Revitalizing the school health programme and health-promoting schools in the SE Asia Region (SEA/RC74/R3)

**Recommendations**

**Actions by Member States**

1. Continue to develop/strengthen national and subnational strategies/roadmaps to implement health-promoting schools.

2. Harness technical packages for capacity-building (teachers, parents and communities) and implement different technical components of school health and nutrition.

3. Organize nationwide platforms for knowledge exchange and share practices from the ministries of health and education, and other line ministries involved in promoting physical, mental, social and environmental health in schools.

**Actions by WHO**

1. Create a regional platform for sharing country experiences and practices.

2. Develop a regional strategy/network of health-promoting schools to accelerate actions such as safe, inclusive education and nutrition promotion in the Region.

3. Consider knowledge management to synthesize impactful actions and outcomes of health-promoting schools.

4. Provide technical guidance on prohibition of unhealthy foods and beverages in schools.