



PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



45th DIRECTING COUNCIL

56th SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE

Washington, D.C., USA, 27 September-1 October 2004

RESOLUTION

CD45.R8

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

THE 45th DIRECTING COUNCIL,

Noting that the current hurricane season has caused great devastation in Bahamas, Cayman Islands, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, and United States of America and has raised an overwhelming expression of solidarity at this 45th Directing Council, particularly for Haiti, where it has exacerbated an already difficult situation;

Considering that in the last decade more than 24 million people have lost loved ones, homes, workplaces, and personal possessions to disasters and noting that the same number of people has been left without health services in the aftermath of disasters due to the loss of or severe damage to health facilities, with direct losses estimated at US\$ 3.12 billion, and that similar natural disaster events are bound to increase in frequency and magnitude;

Mindful of the existence of a regional disaster task force and administrative arrangements of the Secretariat to provide immediate assistance to affected countries;

RESOLVES:

1. To urge Member States to further strengthen their own disaster preparedness and mitigation programs through appropriate allocation of resources and political support to ensure that the health sector remains operational when the affected population most needs it.

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2. To urge Member States to adopt “Hospitals Safe from Disasters” as a national risk reduction policy, set the goal that all new hospitals are built with a level of protection that better guarantees their remaining functional in disaster situations, and implement appropriate mitigation measures to reinforce existing health facilities, particularly those providing primary care.
3. To thank the Director and the Secretariat for the immediate and effective mobilization of disaster management experts to facilitate international health coordination and provide public health assistance to the affected countries.
4. To urge the Director to mobilize resources to strengthen the response capacity of the Organization’s disaster task force for the immediate mobilization of regional expertise and other resources, with special consideration for the most affected priority countries such as Haiti.
5. To request the Director to further improve the disaster management capacity of the Secretariat and to continue supporting Member States in building capacity including increased training opportunities for disaster preparedness, mitigation, and response.

(Ninth meeting, 1 October 2004)