

**FORTY-NINTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY GENEVA, 20-25 MAY 1996****WHA49.25 Prevention of violence: a public health priority****WHA49.25 Prevention of violence: a public health priority**

The Forty-ninth World Health Assembly,

Noting with great concern the dramatic worldwide increase in the incidence of intentional injuries affecting people of all ages and both sexes, but especially women and children;

Endorsing the call made in the Declaration of the World Summit for Social Development for the introduction and implementation of specific policies and programmes of public health and social services to prevent violence in society and mitigate its effect;

Endorsing the recommendations made at the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) and the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) urgently to tackle the problem of violence against women and girls and to understand its health consequences;

Recalling the United Nations Declaration on the elimination of violence against women;

Noting the call made by the scientific community in the Melbourne Declaration adopted at the third international conference on injury prevention and control (1996) for increased international cooperation in ensuring the safety of the citizens of the world;

Recognizing the serious immediate and future long-term implications for health and psychological and social development that violence represents for individuals, families, communities and countries;

Recognizing the growing consequences of violence for health care services everywhere and its detrimental effect on scarce health care resources for countries and communities;

Recognizing that health workers are frequently among the first to see victims of violence, having a unique technical capacity and benefiting from a special position in the community to help those at risk;

Recognizing that WHO, the major agency for coordination of international work in public health, has the responsibility to provide leadership and guidance to Member States in developing public health programmes to prevent self-inflicted violence and violence against others,

1. DECLARES that violence is a leading worldwide public health problem;
2. URGES Member States to assess the problem of violence on their own territory and to communicate to WHO their information about this problem and their approach to it;

3. REQUESTS the Director-General, within available resources, to initiate public health activities to address the problem of violence that will:

(1) characterize different types of violence, define their magnitude and assess the causes and the public health consequences of violence using also a "gender perspective" in the analysis;

(2) assess the types and effectiveness of measures and programmes to prevent violence and mitigate its effects, with particular attention to community-based initiatives;

(3) promote activities to tackle this problem at both international and country level including steps to:

(a) improve the recognition, reporting and management of the consequences of violence;

(b) promote greater intersectoral involvement in the prevention and management of violence;

(c) promote research on violence as a priority for public health research;

(d) prepare and disseminate recommendations for violence prevention programmes in nations, States and communities all over the world;

(4) ensure the coordinated and active participation of appropriate WHO technical programmes;

(5) strengthen the Organization's collaboration with governments, local authorities and other organizations of the United Nations system in the planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes of violence prevention and mitigation;

4. FURTHER REQUESTS the Director-General to present a report to the ninety-ninth session of the Executive Board describing the progress made so far and to present a plan of action for progress towards a science-based public health approach to violence prevention.

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