

## **71st Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa**

**Author:** Federation of African Medical Students' Associations (FAMSA)

**Agenda item:** 17, Framework for Strengthening the Use of Evidence, Information & Research for Policy-making in the African Region

### **Statement:**

FAMSA recognizes the significant steps taken by Member States in the region towards the use of evidence, information and research for policy-making in the African region. The endorsement in 2015 of the resolution on “Research for health: a strategy for the African Region, 2016–2025”, calling for country-led research and use of evidence for health policy-making was a great step in the right direction.

We also recognize the effort of the WHO through the Evidence-Informed Policy Network (EVIPNet) to facilitate knowledge translation and use of evidence for policy-making in the African Region. Today, there are at least 13 Member States active within the network each of them drawing the region to achieve the set goals of this framework.

As a student organization concerned with the improvement of healthcare in Africa, we see the need for this framework. We would also like to make a few recommendations with the hope to make useful contributions to the good work already done.

We call upon the WHO African Region, Member States and all stakeholders to:

- Involve the private sector in the funding of local health policy areas driven research and greater government commitment to funding as defined by the call to action by the Commission on Health Research for Development and Bamako Call
- Reassessing stakeholders commitment to utilizing EVIPnet, challenges of adoption and evolving the network to meet new demands
- Defining the roles of institutions (research institutions, media and leadership roles) in generating evidence, sharing information and synthesis of data for policy making
- Establishing a set of indicators for measuring the functionality of knowledge translation platforms
- Adopting an approach of an institutionalized capacity building programme on knowledge translation, which could be an incentive for researchers and policymakers to work together
- Establish more functional evidence collation and synthesis mechanisms among Member States

- Address the weaknesses in dissemination of research information by establishing functional platforms for translating and communicating research among Member States
- In order to drive community acceptability of evidence driven health policies it is important to address the challenge of mapping the target audience and communicating by tailoring messages to the target audience in a simple language using the media as an effective ally.

We realize the challenges highlighted in this framework and call on Member States and stakeholders to see them as an opportunity to work together and meet them. Investing in systems to generate and utilize evidence, information and research for policy making must be seen as a solution in this peculiar time of a global pandemic that is sure to pay off both now and in the long term. In the end the improvement on healthcare delivery would be a tangible return on these investments. It would also guide sound and informed decision making processes as well as effective resource allocation in the African region

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