

71st Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa

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Agenda item: 18.7, Progress report on research for health: a strategy for the African Region.

Statement:

The progress report on research for health is made after a 10-year period. The strategy for the African Region is based on the period 2016 – 2025 is to create an enabling environment for research.

For years, most member states in the region have tried to put their national health research systems to a better level though it's still lacking in others. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Research development has improved for example South Africa and others.

Research for health is an evidence-based health policy and for a large period of time, it has suffered a problem of poor record making and keeping. We encourage member states to include research programmes in their national budgets to ensure facilitation of all Research activities. A lot of research is done at undergraduate level, most of it is not funded until completion and some of it is forgotten and not involved in academia. Bias on most of the research and other journals on global platforms is another issue and it affects publication. This is one of the reasons as to why the regions' contribution to research output is low globally.

The capacity for health research in the region is low owing to a weak health research system. The fact that most low- and middle-income countries in the region have limited health systems also affects the progress of Research.

We urge member states to sustain research investments post-COVID-19, develop guidelines for data standards and interoperability in the Region, support the introduction and assessment of Research programmes in the region and to subsidize funds for ethics review to facilitate national health research systems.