

RESOLUTION

OF THE
WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR SOUTH-EAST ASIA

SEA/RC72/R3

MEASLES AND RUBELLA ELIMINATION BY 2023

The Regional Committee,

RECALLING the World Health Assembly resolution WHA65.17 on “Global Vaccine Action Plan” which targeted the elimination of measles and rubella in five WHO regions,

FURTHER RECALLING its resolution SEA/RC66/R5 on “Measles Elimination and Rubella/Congenital Rubella Syndrome Control”,

APPRECIATING the progress made towards achieving the goal of measles elimination in five countries and rubella control in six countries of the South-East Asia Region,

RECOGNIZING the fact that the South-East Asia Region has experienced a 75% reduction in mortality due to measles in 2017 compared with 2000,

COGNIZANT of the fact that the South-East Asia Region bears the highest burden of the congenital rubella syndrome, a preventable birth defect due to rubella virus, estimated at 52 000 cases per year in the Region out of the 105 000 cases per year globally,

NOTING that all WHO regions have set a measles elimination goal and three WHO regions have set a rubella elimination goal with 82 (43%) countries verified for measles elimination and 76 (39%) countries verified for rubella elimination globally as of May 2019,

CONCERNED with the conclusion of the mid-term review of the “Strategic Plan for Measles Elimination and Rubella and Congenital Rubella Syndrome Control in the South-East Asia Region: 2014–2020” conducted in 2017 that stated that the goal of measles elimination and rubella/CRS control by 2020 is unlikely to be achieved,

RECOGNIZING that various health system challenges, notably sustaining a high level of routine immunization coverage in the context of other public health priorities that compete for limited resources, need to be addressed,

REITERATING that strengthening routine immunization in the presence of a well-performing surveillance system is the cornerstone for success and that high-level advocacy and intense social mobilization, coupled with health systems strengthening, contribute to demand generation for immunization services,

REAFFIRMING and taking pride in the demonstrated capacity of the Region to deliver on global challenges related to immunization systems such as polio eradication and maternal and neonatal tetanus elimination,

CONSIDERING the recommendations from the Midterm review that Member States of the Region consider adopting a regional rubella elimination goal, synchronized with the existing regional measles elimination goal, in order to leverage the momentum and political will for measles elimination also for the elimination of rubella,

NOTING the recommendation made by the “Third Meeting of the South-East Asia Regional Verification Commission for Measles Elimination and Rubella/Congenital Rubella Syndrome Control” in 2018 that the Region should adopt the goal of rubella elimination,

CITING the results of the March 2019 “WHO South-East Asia Regional High-Level Consultation on adopting the revised goal of measles and rubella elimination” held with Member States in New Delhi, India, on the feasibility of establishing a rubella elimination goal and aligning the measles and rubella elimination goals, and the recommendations of the Tenth Meeting of the “South-East Asia Regional Immunization Technical Advisory Group”,

NOTING that the ‘Proposed Strategic Plan for measles and rubella elimination in the WHO South-East Asia Region 2020–2024’ was reviewed during the Regional High-Level Consultation with Member States in New Delhi, India,

1. DECIDES to adopt the goal of measles and rubella elimination in the South-East Asia Region by 2023;

2. ENDORSES the ‘Strategic Plan for measles and rubella elimination in the WHO South-East Asia Region 2020–2024’;

3. URGES Member States to:

- (a) strengthen immunization systems for increasing and sustaining high-level of population immunity against measles and rubella at both national and subnational levels through adequately funded plans and their effective implementation;
- (b) achieve and maintain highly sensitive laboratory supported case-based surveillance systems to monitor progress and for high-quality epidemiological assessments to inform policy and planning of strategies to interrupt transmission of measles and rubella viruses;
- (c) develop national and subnational strategies, as appropriate, to achieve measles and rubella elimination in line with the Regional Strategic Plan;
- (d) strengthen preparedness and effective response to measles and rubella outbreaks; and
- (e) mobilize political, societal and financial support to ensure the achievement of measles and rubella elimination by 2023; and

4. REQUESTS the Regional Director to:

- (a) provide quality technical assistance to Member States in their efforts to develop and implement elimination policies, strategies and plans;
- (b) mobilize the required resources, build on existing partnerships, and foster

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