

Beijing Declaration

Adopted by the WHO Congress on Traditional Medicine, Beijing, China, 8 November 2008

Participants at the World Health Organization Congress on Traditional Medicine, meeting in Beijing this eighth day of November in the year two thousand and eight;

Recalling the International Conference on Primary Health Care at Alma Ata thirty years ago and noting that people have the right and duty to participate individually and collectively in the planning and implementation of their health care, which may include access to traditional medicine;

Recalling World Health Assembly resolutions promoting traditional medicine, including WHA56.31 on Traditional Medicine of May 2003;

Noting that the term "traditional medicine" covers a wide variety of therapies and practices which may vary greatly from country to country and from region to region, and that traditional medicine may also be referred to as alternative or complementary medicine;

Recognizing traditional medicine as one of the resources of primary health care services to increase availability and affordability and to contribute to improve health outcomes including those mentioned in the Millennium Development Goals;

Recognizing that Member States have different domestic legislation, approaches, regulatory responsibilities and delivery models;

Noting that progress in the field of traditional medicine has been obtained in a number of Member States through implementation of the WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2002-2005;

Expressing the need for action and cooperation by the international community, governments, and health professionals and workers, to ensure proper use of traditional medicine as an important component contributing to the health of all people, in accordance with national capacity, priorities and relevant legislation;

In accordance with national capacities, priorities, relevant legislation and circumstances, hereby make the following Declaration:

- I. The knowledge of traditional medicine, treatments and practices should be respected, preserved, promoted and communicated widely and appropriately based on the circumstances in each country.
- II. Governments have a responsibility for the health of their people and should formulate national policies, regulations and standards, as part of comprehensive national health systems to ensure appropriate, safe and effective use of traditional medicine.
- III. Recognizing the progress of many governments to date in integrating traditional medicine into their national health systems, we call on those who have not yet done so to take action.
- IV. Traditional medicine should be further developed based on research and innovation in line with the "Global strategy and plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property" adopted at the Sixty-first World Health Assembly in resolution WHA61.21 in 2008. Governments, international organizations and other stakeholders should collaborate in implementing the global strategy and plan of action.
- V. Governments should establish systems for the qualification, accreditation or licensing of traditional medicine practitioners. Traditional medicine practitioners should upgrade their knowledge and skills based on national requirements.
- VI. The communication between conventional and traditional medicine providers should be strengthened and appropriate training programmes be established for health professionals, medical students and relevant researchers.