

Florence 28 – 31 October 2008

Florence Declaration

Complementary and Traditional Medicine in Public Health: Towards an Integral Health System

The three working days of the International Workshop in Florence, which was attended by delegations and experts from **AFGHANISTAN, ALBANIA, AUSTRIA, BOLIVIA, CHILE, CUBA, ECUADOR, EL SALVADOR, FRANCE, GABON, GERMANY, GUATEMALA, INDIA, IRAN, ITALY, LEBANON, MALI, MOROCCO, MOZAMBIQUE, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, SERBIA, SYRIA, SRI LANKA, SOUTH AFRICA, SWITZERLAND,** and **VENEZUELA**, representatives of United Nation Agencies, international cooperation organizations and decentralized cooperation, ended with the following declaration:

- Health systems must adapt and respond using an intercultural approach to combat disease and guarantee health to everyone.
- Respect for human rights is fundamental for the achievement of health in a context where the use of natural resources takes place in a protected environment.
- That the concept of a Good Life, as defined in some Latin American countries, includes people living together in diversity and harmony under the principles of complementarity, reciprocity, inclusion and respect for nature and the environment, which makes it possible to achieve health for all.

It is recognised that complementary and traditional medicine:

- Is of great importance in that it is an instrument for empowering and enriching the capacity of public health systems and improving the quality of life;
- Can help improve the quality of social economic development processes;
- Valorises territorial, national and cultural resources to improve the health and development of local communities;
- Represents and importance way of safeguarding cultural diversity, since it enriches the heritage of knowledge and boosts operational capability,
- Enables health facilities to focus on integral health, in the sense of physical, mental, spiritual and social wellbeing of people, nature and the environment.

It is recognised that:

- Complementary and traditional medicine is not only to be considered historical heritage, but also, because of its constant creative development, a present and future heritage of humanity and the environment;
- Progress has been made in many countries in integrating complementary and traditional medicine in public health care systems;
- A wealth of best practices is used by the different actors involved in these process and there is a need to disseminate accumulated knowledge
- Grassroots organisations, local institutions, NGO's and international cooperation play an important role in implementing traditional medicine in public health care institutions and linking it with academic or Western medicine.

It is recommended that, in accordance with WHO guidelines and resolutions:

1. National governments and health ministries should:
 - Strengthen health care systems with the contributions of the complementary and traditional medicine.
 - Promote and support processes to validate the safety, quality, effectiveness and efficacy of complementary and traditional medicine.
 - Valorise and protect the heritage of knowledge of medicinal plants and remedies used in complementary and traditional medicine, defending them from speculation by multinational companies.
 - Organize training initiatives for social and healthcare workers to improve their capacity to use complementary and traditional medicine.
 - Recognize and formalize the practice of traditional medicine in all aspects, as well as the role of traditional practitioners.
2. Regional and local governments, networks and social actors in local communities should systematically include in their cooperation initiatives the theme of integrating complementary and traditional medicine in public health systems, considering it as part of the territorial development.
3. The WHO, UNDP, UNOPS UNEP, UNIFEM, and other international intergovernmental organisations and development partners should support the international network of experiences in the integration of complementary and traditional medicine into public health care systems.
4. The organizers of the workshop should promote an international cooperation programme to support the above mentioned international network and national policies to integrate complementary and traditional medicine in public health care systems.
5. All workshop participants should play an active role in the international network so that their experiences can contribute to the accumulation of knowledge and practices, the work of socio-health systems and intercultural promotion.
6. The cooperation organizations of donor governments, the EU, intergovernmental organisations, regional and local governments should support politically and financially public health systems that decide to integrate complementary and traditional medicine and the international cooperation programme to support the network.
7. All actors committed to the integration of complementary and traditional medicine in public health should work hard to establish networking with the aim of strengthening and disseminating experiences.
8. The WHO, UNDP, UNEP, UNIFEM and UNOPS, and other interested institutions should organize a new international meeting next year to consolidate and strengthen the exchange of experiences in the integration of complementary and traditional medicine in public health care