GENEVA—Today's decisions at the World Health Assembly focused on implementation of the International Health Regulations, and improving the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of sepsis.

International Health Regulations

Delegates emphasized the urgent need to achieve full implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) – the international legal instrument designed to help the global community prevent and respond to acute public health risks that have the potential to cross borders and threaten people worldwide.

The Regulations, which entered into force on 15 June 2007, require countries to report certain disease outbreaks and public health events to WHO. They define the rights and obligations of countries to report public health events, and establish a number of procedures that WHO must follow in its work to uphold global public health security.

Delegates requested the Director-General to work with Member States to develop a five-year global strategic plan for IHR implementation and submit it to the World Health Assembly in 2018. The strategic plan is to be based on guiding principles including consultation, country ownership, WHO leadership, broad partnerships, community involvement, regional integration, and results and accountability. The strategic plan is to focus on using an intersectoral approach; integration with the health system; focus on fragile contexts; domestic financing for

sustainability; balance between legally binding and voluntary elements; and an emphasis on monitoring.

Delegates also requested the Director-General to pursue and strengthen efforts to support Member States in full implementation of the Regulations, including through building their core public health capacities.

Sepsis

Delegates also agreed on a resolution to improve the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of sepsis.

Sepsis occurs when a person has an infection and the body's reaction injures tissues and organs. Sepsis can be triggered by infections caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites. Bacterial infections are the most common triggers. Early recognition of sepsis is crucial to treating patients before their condition worsens and becomes fatal. Antimicrobial resistance makes it much more difficult to treat infections and stop them evolving into sepsis. Antimicrobial resistance occurs when bacteria and other microbes change to resist the effects of antibiotics and other antimicrobial medicine. Most infections can be avoided by improving hygiene, access to vaccinations and other infection prevention measures.

The resolution urges governments to strengthen policies and processes related to sepsis, especially to prevent infections and the further spread of antimicrobial resistance. It emphasizes the importance of reinforcing health worker training to recognize and deal effectively with the condition, improve tracking and reporting of cases, and promote research to develop more tools for sepsis diagnosis and treatment.

Further, the resolution requests that WHO develop a report on sepsis and guidance for its prevention and management.ÂÂ In addition, the resolution directs the Organization to help countries develop the necessary infrastructure, laboratory capacity, strategies and tools to reduce the burden of sepsis. It also asks WHO to work with partners to help developing countries gain access to quality, safe, efficacious and affordable sepsis treatments and tools for infection prevention and control, including immunization.