Regional meeting prior to the Global Ministerial Conference

Preconference of the Americas: Strengthening the role of the health sector as part of a multisectoral response to violence against children and adolescents

6 November 2024 in Bogota, Colombia

BACKGROUND: Violence against children and adolescents is widespread in the Region of the Americas and takes many different forms, all equally unacceptable. The costs are enormous for children and adolescents, families and communities. The Region has the highest child homicide rate in the world. In addition to these deaths, millions of children suffer, for example, violence-related trauma that requires emergency medical treatment.

Violence against children and adolescents can be prevented. This requires a multi-sectoral approach that includes the health sector. With the health sector leadership, there are opportunities to identify abuse and intervene early in health services to reduce the burden of violence in the Region. In collaboration with others, the health sector must also work to prevent violence from occurring, including by promoting strategies and interventions in line with the INSPIRE framework. The Region has numerous tools and good practices to help countries strengthen the response to violence against children and adolescents.

The proposed meeting is an opportunity to take stock of lessons learned and discuss next steps to strengthen the health sector’s response to violence against children and adolescents within a multisectoral framework. It will take place on 6 November, the day prior to the Global Ministerial Conference to End Violence against Children, and therefore represents an opportunity to strengthen the regional dialogue between health sector representatives and prepare together for the conference.

OBJECTIVES:
• Discuss the challenges and opportunities in order to advance in strengthening the health sector’s response to violence against children and adolescents;
• Strengthen dialogue between countries on good practices and what works to improve the role of the health sector as part of the multisectoral response to violence against children and adolescents;
• Promote the political commitment of the countries of the Americas to end violence against children and adolescents in a collaborative manner in order to inform the global conference and its follow-up.
• Agree on a brief outcome document outlining key regional priorities and possible next steps for the Americas

PARTICIPANTS: The meeting will have approximately 40-50 participants, including high-level representative from the Ministry of Health from each PAHO Member States, who will share their country’s experience on violence from the perspective of the health sector and discuss and agree on next steps for the Region. The participation of representatives from other government sectors in countries of the Region, who will be part of the country’s multi-sector delegation to the Global Ministerial Conference, as well as representatives from civil society and other agencies will also be welcome. Simultaneous interpretation in Spanish and English will be available.

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