



Thumbs up for traditional medicines

By Online Editor

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The World Health Organisation's Regional Strategy for Traditional Medicine has been endorsed by countries in the Western Pacific Region.

The Strategy, which is from 2011 to 2020, is the result of an extensive consultation process since 2009.

It provides guidance for member States, WHO, development partners and other stakeholders on how to maximise the potential of traditional medicine as a part of national health systems.

It was endorsed last week in a meeting attended by Health Minister Neil Sharma in Manila, Philippines.

In a statement, the WHO said: “The region has a rich history of traditional medicine, with many different forms practiced across the region.”

“Millions of people visit traditional doctors, healers and use traditional medicine,” it said.

“However, there is limited coordination between traditional medicine and the Western health system. Poor regulatory standards for practice and products, questions over the safety and efficacy of some remedies and practices, and inadequate financial and human resources also need to be addressed if traditional medicine is to effectively contribute to improving health in the region.”

“The strategy calls on countries to address these challenges, recognising that each country needs to take its own approach based on existing legislation and circumstances,” the statement said.

WHO Regional Director for the Western Pacific, Dr Shin Young-soo said the strategy "gives increased emphasis to the values of primary health care and universal access to health services and the contribution that traditional medicine can make".

Dr Shin stressed the importance of cooperation and sharing information to support the quality, safety and efficacy of traditional medicine.

SOURCE: FIJI TIMES/PACNEWS