

Summary report on the

WHO-EM/STD/157/E

# Meeting of the regional technical working group on the elimination of mother- to-child transmission of HIV

Cairo, Egypt  
27–28 February 2012



**World Health  
Organization**

Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

Summary report on the

# **Meeting of the regional technical working group on the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV**

Cairo, Egypt  
27–28 February 2012



**World Health  
Organization**

Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

© World Health Organization 2014

All rights reserved.

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the World Health Organization concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Dotted lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement. The mention of specific companies or of certain manufacturers' products does not imply that they are endorsed or recommended by the World Health Organization in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned. Errors and omissions excepted, the names of proprietary products are distinguished by initial capital letters.

All reasonable precautions have been taken by the World Health Organization to verify the information contained in this publication. However, the published material is being distributed without warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied. The responsibility for the interpretation and use of the material lies with the reader. In no event shall the World Health Organization be liable for damages arising from its use.

Publications of the World Health Organization can be obtained from Distribution and Sales, World Health Organization, Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, PO Box 7608, Nasr City, Cairo 11371, Egypt (tel: +202 2670 2535, fax: +202 2670 2492; email: [PMP@emro.who.int](mailto:PMP@emro.who.int)). Requests for permission to reproduce, in part or in whole, or to translate publications of WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean – whether for sale or for noncommercial distribution – should be addressed to WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, at the above address: email: [WAP@emro.who.int](mailto:WAP@emro.who.int)

Document WHO-EM/STD/157/E/01.14

## Contents

1.	Introduction.....	1
2.	Conclusions.....	2
3.	The way forward.....	3

## **1. Introduction**

In June, 2010, United Nations agencies and key partners made a commitment to work towards eliminating mother-to-child transmission of HIV by the year 2015. In June, 2011, the United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting on AIDS further endorsed this goal through adoption of the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS. In order to demonstrate the commitment of countries of the WHO Eastern Mediterranean and UNAIDS Middle East and North Africa regions (hereafter referred to as “the region”) to a generation free of HIV and to provide countries in the region with a region-appropriate, systematic approach to the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (eMTCT), WHO, UNICEF, UNAIDS and UNFPA joined forces to support the development of a regional framework for eMTCT in 2012.

To enable the region to begin the process of creating an appropriate and effective eMTCT framework, WHO and UNICEF in collaboration with UNAIDS and UNFPA convened a Technical Working Group of representatives with PMTCT experience in the region from 27-28 February in Cairo, Egypt

The objective of the meeting was to provide guidance for the development of a regional framework for the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Expected outcomes were to reach consensus on key principles, components and strategic directions of a regional framework for eMTCT, and to create a roadmap for the eMTCT initiative in the Region.

Dr Jouaud Mahjour, Director, Communicable Disease Control, WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, officially opened the meeting on behalf of Dr Ala Alwan, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean. He reiterated the magnitude of the problem of paediatric AIDS, and while recognizing that eMTCT is a complex and challenging public health endeavor, he stated that it is feasible and

appropriate to work toward that goal in the Region. Despite the specific HIV epidemiological situation and cultural context of the EM/MENA region, bold targets were needed to catalyse the implementation of eMTCT, inform the planning processes and mobilize resources.

Dr Samir Anouti, Regional HIV/AIDS Advisor, UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office, welcomed the participants and explained UNICEF's commitment to eliminating MTCT in the region.

## **2. Conclusions**

The region as one of low (but increasing) HIV prevalence, with 17 million births annually, antenatal care coverage of 80%, 14 200 HIV-infected pregnant women in need of antiretroviral (ARV) prophylaxis, and ARV coverage of about 7%.

The following regional goals and targets were discussed and consensus was built that they should form the basis for the regional framework for the elimination of mother-to-child transmission.

Goal: virtually eliminate new paediatric HIV infections and improve maternal and child health and survival in the context of HIV

Targets:

- Increase coverage of HIV testing among pregnant women to 95%
- Increase coverage of HIV infected pregnant women receiving ARV interventions to 95%
- Decrease new paediatric HIV infections by 90%

Countries will be encouraged to consider global and regional targets, and to establish their own phased targets that are feasible and promote quality and scale-up.

Challenges include the currently low PMTCT coverage, lack of comprehensive approaches to PMTCT and small scale of interventions, difficulties in identifying pregnant women who are at high risk of HIV-infection or are HIV-infected, and constraints to offering ARV interventions.

Opportunities, however, include using eMTCT as a means to address women and HIV in the region, linking with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 and 5 and using a phased and incremental approach.

Guiding principles for the regional eMTCT framework as agreed upon by the technical working group are:

- Promote country leadership and ownership
- Align and coordinate with health initiatives (MDGs 4 and 5)
- Involve people living with HIV
- Support action on all four prongs
- Women living with HIV at the center of the response
- Leverage synergies/linkages and integration for improved sustainability
- Shared responsibility and accountability

Most importantly, adopting a regional framework will demonstrate the Region's commitment to the global vision, provide a systematic approach to eMTCT, serve as a means to advocate national government endorsement and mobilization of funds, agree upon priority actions, and effectively track progress.

### **3. The way forward**

Dr Riedner described the process for moving forward with the development of the eMTCT framework including the participation of a UN task team, participants of the technical working group, and partner

UN and other relevant agencies. When the draft framework is available, countries are encouraged to hold small, country-level consultations with stakeholders to review it and offer suggestions for modifications.

In terms of the way forward and provisional timeline, the first draft of the regional eMTCT framework should be available by end April 2012, while a United Nations task team will have been formed. Feedback from the technical working group will be solicited by mid May 2012 and a revised draft of the framework will be produced. Electronic and country level consultations with all relevant stakeholders in the region will be held during June–July. In September, the framework will be finalized with inputs from a regional meeting, funds permitting. A regional eMTCT resolution may be proposed to the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean in October, and a launching is planned for December 2012.



The image features a minimalist, abstract design composed of several rectangular blocks. A large teal block occupies the top right and bottom right portions. A grey block is positioned at the top left. A horizontal grey band runs across the middle. A dark grey block is located in the bottom left. The bottom of the image is a solid grey bar containing white text.

World Health Organization  
Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean  
P.O. Box 7608, Nasr City 11371  
Cairo, Egypt  
[www.emro.who.int](http://www.emro.who.int)