



**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN**

9 October 2013

**Sixtieth Session
Muscat, Oman, 27-30 October 2013**

TECHNICAL EVENT

**REGIONAL INITIATIVE TO END THE HIV TREATMENT CRISIS AND LAUNCH
OF THE REPORT “ACCELERATING HIV TREATMENT”**

Objectives of the event

The event is a joint activity of WHO and UNAIDS. The objectives of the event are to:

- promote the regional initiative to end the HIV treatment crisis; and
- launch the related report *Accelerating HIV treatment in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean and UNAIDS Middle East and North Africa regions*

Introduction and background

While new HIV infections are on the decline globally they continue to increase at a high rate in the Eastern Mediterranean/Middle East and North Africa regions. With every new infection the number of people living with HIV (PLHIV) in need of treatment, now and in the future, is also rising. Despite the commendable efforts made to make antiretroviral therapy available in all countries of the Region over the past decade, in 2011 antiretroviral (ART) coverage still did not exceed 14% – by far the lowest coverage globally. The low ART coverage is the result of an accumulation of failures and weaknesses of current HIV control strategies and programmes in the Region.

WHO and UNAIDS are calling for a regional initiative to end the HIV treatment crisis and accelerate HIV treatment access. The goal is to achieve coverage with ART of at least 50% of PLHIV in need of treatment by 2015 and universal coverage with HIV treatment by 2020. A regional report entitled *Accelerating HIV treatment in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean and UNAIDS Middle East and North Africa regions* puts forward recommendations to guide governments and their partners to achieve these objectives through the right policies and investments. Full ownership and leadership by the Ministers of Health will be essential for the success of this initiative.

Expected outcomes

- Political commitment towards the implementation of the initiative and the recommendations for action as outlined in the report in order to achieve regional treatment targets
- Commitment to allocate additional domestic resources for HIV testing and treatment scale-up
- Public awareness through media coverage of the initiative and plans to accelerate life-saving HIV treatment in the Region.