

WHO reform – towards bottom-up planning and secured flexible funding

On the final day of RC60 the Committee will discuss WHO reform, and in particular, planning and implementation of the programme budget for 2014–2015 and development of the programme budget for 2016–2017. This process is closely linked with the ongoing financing dialogue.

The Regional Committee adopted at its 59th session a resolution emphasizing the need for a country-based (bottom-up) planning process in response to the needs of Member States. This resolution has guided operational planning for 2014–2015 in the Region based on clear priority-setting at country level. This approach was further amplified by the World Health Assembly decision in May 2013 requesting the Director-General to propose a new resource allocation



methodology utilizing bottom-up planning process and realistic costing of outputs with clearly defined roles and responsibilities across the three levels of WHO.

Another important cornerstone of WHO reform is financing. Currently WHO relies on voluntary contributions for 77% of its revenue.

Most of these funds become available gradually during the course of budget implementation and are typically earmarked. The financing dialogue with and among Member States and other funders is expected to lead to at least 70% predictable and flexible financing at the start of the 2014–2015 biennium.

Saving the lives of mothers and children

RC60 discussed the regional situation of maternal and child health in terms of progress towards achieving the targets of MDGs 4 and 5. The technical paper on saving the lives of mothers and children shows that 10 countries in the Region contribute to 95% of regional maternal and infant mortality.

Every year in the Region, 39 000 mothers and 899 000 children under

the age of five die needlessly from preventable causes. These deaths occur because women and children do not have access to quality maternal and child health services. At the current rate, the Region as a whole will not be able to achieve MDGs 4 and 5 unless intensive and accelerated progress is made.

(continued on page 2)

60th session of the Regional Committee concludes work today

RC60 will conclude its work today in Muscat by considering several draft resolutions proposed by Member States to address priority health issues of concern to the Region.



Saving the Lives of Mothers & Children Rising to the Challenge

(continued from page 1) To respond to this need a regional initiative: “Saving the Lives of Mothers and Children: Rising to the Challenge” was launched at a high-level meeting in January 2013. The initiative focuses on the 10 priority countries in order to scale up cost-effective interventions and strengthen partnerships. Through implementation of national acceleration plans to reduce maternal and infant mortality

it is estimated that the lives of 13 500 mothers and 128 000 children under five will be saved every year.

During RC60 Member States shared the progress they have achieved in improving maternal and child health. Dr Richard Horton, Editor in Chief of *The Lancet* and Co-chair of the independent Expert Review Group on Information and Accountability for Women’s and Children’s Health, made a brief presentation on accountability emphasizing the importance of: 1) monitoring which requires a robust health information system; 2) review

through a transparent, participatory process; and 3) remedy through a plan to accelerate progress and overcome barriers to success.



Health across the life course

RC60 discussed yesterday the steps that will be taken to define the new set of health goals for the post-2015 period. Among the main health topics to be prioritized are: the 1.8 billion adolescents whose health has largely been neglected, the needs of ageing populations worldwide and the assurance of an effective response to the challenge posed by noncommunicable diseases.

As the health agenda changes so do ideas of how to address health. In the

past, all effort concentrated on how to deal with the causes of ill-health, now health encompasses not only disease but social determinants of health across the life course.

Instead of defining what one set of countries commits to doing with financial or technical support from others, WHO and partners are now defining ways of framing new global goals which reflect global health concerns, such as immunization to prevent vaccine preventable diseases.

To develop a blueprint of the post-2015 health development agenda, the UN has been engaged in consultation with 88 countries and stakeholders who were mobilized around 11 thematic issues at the global level. These consultations have shown that countries do not need to adopt a whole cross-sectoral menu in one plan but are able to choose “the components” that are best for them.

Careful preparations lead to a successful hajj season

Dr Ziad Memish, Undersecretary for Public Health of Saudi Arabia, and Member of the Saudi delegation to RC60 described the preparations for a successful outcome to hajj 2013. He said that hajj was the largest mass gathering in the world. A total of 1 949 995 people had attended in 2013, approximately two thirds of whom came from outside the country. Upon entry, pilgrims were provided with vaccination or prophylaxis for polio, meningococcal meningitis or yellow fever, depending

on their country of origin and immunization status. Pilgrimage sites were covered by a network of 25 hospitals and 141 primary health care centres. The Ministry of Health worked in close coordination with WHO and public health authorities around the world, and special arrangements were made in 2013 to address the risks of infection from the Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV).





Dr Ali Ben Talib Al-Hinai, Under Secretary, Ministry of Health of Oman and Dr Abdulla Assaedi, WHO Representative in Oman talking to the media during a press conference on Tuesday

Health progress in Oman: indicators and evidence

Oman has achieved great advances in health care delivery over the past few decades reflected in their national health indicators.

Dr Ali Ben Talib Al-Hinai, Under Secretary, Ministry of Health of Oman, said that Oman was among one of the countries that provided the best primary

health care services in the world – their maternal and infant mortality rates were among the lowest in the world; life expectancy had increased from 49.5 years just a few decades ago to 76 years today; immunization coverage rates stood at 100% and the country had been successful in eliminating malaria.

Oman has successfully eliminated trachoma and this will be officially announced next month. Oman has developed an excellent cadre of health care workers and a long-term strategic plan for health which extends up until 2050.

International Alliance of Patients' Organizations (IAPO) urges support for universal health coverage

The Representative of IAPO said that expanding universal health coverage represented an opportunity to ensure health for all, tackle poverty and encourage sustainable development. The Alliance urged

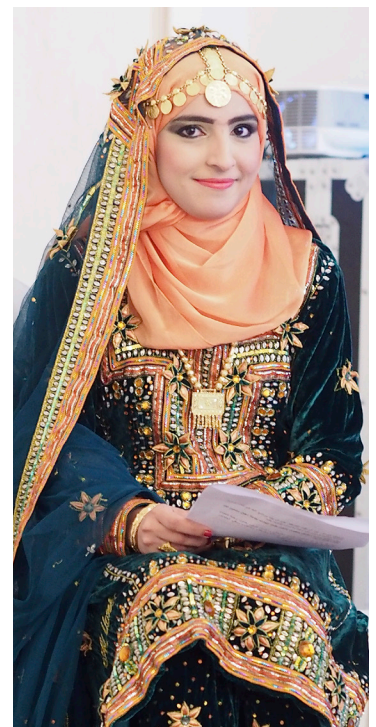
strategies and actions to highlight the importance of ensuring strong civil society engagement and particularly the involvement of patients' organizations in the implementation of the road map for universal health

coverage. It also called on WHO to more clearly define universal health coverage and to scale up support to Member States.

RC60 in photos

(continued on page 4)





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