



REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

September 2016

Sixty-third Session
EMRO, Cairo, 3-6 October 2016

ANNOTATED AGENDA FOR TECHNICAL MEETINGS
3 October 2016

Introduction

In accordance with Decision No. 3 of the Fifty-ninth Session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean in 2012 it was decided that the recently introduced practice of arranging technical meetings immediately prior to the Regional Committee should continue and be open to the Representatives of all members of the Committee.

1. Prevention and care of genetic and congenital disorders, including preconception care

In the post-2015 development agenda and in line with the United Nations *Global strategy on women's, children's and adolescent health 2016–2030*, care delivery along the continuum of care is crucial to achieving better maternal and child health outcomes. Despite growing evidence that preconception care can improve the well-being of women and children, there is a gap in focusing on continuum of care during the pre-pregnancy period. To address this gap, consensus has been reached on a set of core interventions, a regional operational framework and service delivery channels for preconception care, and a regional package of evidence-based interventions and programmatic steps for promoting preconception care within countries has been developed. The package of preconception care is currently being integrated into a broader package that covers care during pregnancy and after birth with special focus on the prevention and care of common congenital disorders. This session will discuss development of collaborative mechanisms to support countries to scale-up preconception care-related activities and integrate preconception care within 2016–2020 strategic planning for reproductive, maternal, neonatal and child health programmes.

2. Emergency care as an essential component of universal health coverage in the Region

Emergency care encompasses a range of time-sensitive health care services provided for acute medical, surgical and obstetric emergencies, from injuries and infections to heart attacks and complications of pregnancy. Emergency care is the first point of contact with the health system for many people, and an essential component of integrated health services provision and universal health coverage. Timely, quality emergency care could prevent death and disability from many conditions but services are still underdeveloped in many countries in the Region. Eight priority actions, contained within the proposed *Framework of action to scale up the emergency care system*, have been identified as critical to the development of emergency care services in the Region. This session aims to gain consensus on the eight proposed priority actions for scaling-up emergency care services in the Region and discuss the way forward and development of collaborative mechanisms to support the scaling-up of emergency care services.

3. Developing a package of high priority health interventions for universal health coverage

The Regional Office has been working intensively with Member States, over the last four years, to develop and implement policies to expand population coverage and enhance financial protection. Under the area of expanding service coverage, the framework for action on advancing universal health coverage in the Region requires countries to design and implement a service package of highest priority, evidence-informed person- and population-based interventions. In partnership with a network of experts from the Disease Control Priorities 3 Project two packages of high-impact interventions (covering intersectoral policy priorities for health intervention and covering packages of health care and delivery platforms) have been developed that will be presented and discussed during the session, in addition to the next steps proposed by WHO to develop a generic high-priority package of health services specific to the Region.

4. Strengthening national health information systems for better reporting of regional core indicators and SDGs

The strengthening of health information systems is a priority for WHO in the Region. Intensive work with Member States since 2012 has resulted in development of a clear framework for health information systems and 68 core indicators that focus on: monitoring health determinants and risks; assessing health status, including morbidity and cause-specific mortality; and assessing health system response. The regional core indicators were endorsed by the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean at its 61st session, and Member States started to adopt and report on the core indicators in 2014. In order to facilitate standardized collection and analysis of data and reporting of the core indicators, a concise indicator registry with key attributes has also been published. The sources of data for the regional core indicators come from a variety of sources, such as civil registration, surveys, and routine health information systems. Irrespective of the source of data for the core indicators, regular assessments of national health information systems and country capacity and future plans to report on the core indicators are warranted. This session will provide Member States with a broader understanding of priority actions to strengthen national health information systems and address gaps in generating reliable data and result in the development of action points for follow-up on proposed strategies to enhance quality and reporting of the 68 core indicators.

5. Health workforce development in the Region

The Eastern Mediterranean Region is facing major health workforce challenges. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) underpin the need to improve the health workforce. The Global strategy on human resources for health: workforce 2030, adopted by the World Health Assembly in May 2016, is a response to this vision. Building on the global strategy on human resources for health, as well as earlier regional commitments, the draft strategic framework for health workforce development in the Region has been developed to guide country and regional actions towards strengthening the health workforce in Member States across the Region. This session will present and discuss the draft regional strategic framework.

6. Addressing air quality and health in the Region

This session will emphasize the role of the health sector in lowering the severe health impacts of air pollution in the Region through communicating health messages on air pollution, and catalysing air pollution mitigation interventions and policies by other sectors, such as transport, energy, municipality, agriculture, etc. It will highlight synergies and cross linkages between air pollution and health and other global agendas, such as the SDGs, climate change and housing and sustainable urban development. The session aims to reach consensus on the need to compile a regional database and develop a regional framework for action for implementation of the newly endorsed global road map to address the health impacts of air pollution in the Region.