



**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN**

August 2017

**Sixty-fourth Session
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**DEVELOPMENT OF A NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASE EMERGENCY HEALTH
KIT FOR THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION: RATIONALE AND
APPROACH**

Objectives of the event

The objective of this event is to brief Member States on the rationale behind the development of a new emergency health kit for the management of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in humanitarian disasters and emergencies in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

Background

In response to often poorly coordinated medical supply donations, United Nations agencies and international nongovernmental organizations providing humanitarian assistance during emergencies have been working to develop standardized emergency health kits for field use. In the 1980s, WHO, with partner agencies, launched an Interagency Emergency Health Kit (IEHK) to provide a standard package of medicines and simple medical devices for humanitarian relief agencies to use in emergencies.

The IEHK aims to meet the initial primary health-care needs of a displaced population when medical facilities and supply chain are disrupted or destroyed in the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster or during a conflict. Temporarily catering for the needs of 10 000 people for approximately three months, the IEHK was an important innovation in the care of people affected by disasters, and has likely helped to improve the health of people in a number of emergencies where it has been used over the last three decades. However, the IEHK was not designed to respond to all specific needs and has over time been revised to accommodate different morbidity patterns with the adjunction of new items and/or the development of new modules (e.g. post-exposure prophylaxis or malaria modules).

Acknowledging the growing burden posed by NCDs, mainly cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes, during emergencies, the WHO Secretariat has been mandated through the *WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013–2020* ‘to deploy an IEHK for treatment of NCDs in humanitarian disasters and emergencies’. Available medicines and devices to manage NCDs in current IEHKs are limited to a few items. A new proposal for the inclusion of NCD medicines and medical supplies has been submitted for the 2016 revision of the IEHK with a focus on a set of medicines and medical supplies for the management of acute exacerbations rather than ongoing chronic management of NCDs.

In order to address this gap and taking into consideration the high prevalence of NCDs among people living in emergency/crisis-prone areas in the Region, the WHO Regional Office, in consultation with other WHO regional offices and humanitarian partners, has

proposed the development of an NCD emergency health kit that might complement the IEHK. The new kit would be made available in the WHO catalogue for countries to order and for pre-deployment in regional humanitarian hubs.

Similar to the IEHK, the NCD kit would aim to cater for the NCD-related health care needs of a population of 10 000 for three months, focusing on the provision of essential care at primary health care level.

Expected outcomes of the meeting

- Clear understanding of the rationale behind the development of the new emergency kit.
- Agreement on the need for field pilot deployment of the new kit in selected countries affected by emergencies.