

**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN
Sixty-fifth Session
Khartoum, Sudan, 15-18 October 2018**

October 2018

SIDE EVENT

THE GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA

Objectives of the event

The objectives of the event are to:

- provide an update on the strategic framework for collaboration between WHO and the Global Fund and its operationalization in the Eastern Mediterranean Region;
- share information, policy updates and key decisions taken at the Global Fund Board meetings held in 2017–2018 and the implications for the Region;
- provide an update on the implementation of the funding cycle 2017–2019 and the new plan of application;
- discuss key measures to accelerate implementation, especially in challenging operating environments, in collaboration with partners and stakeholders.

Background

Fifteen countries in the Region are receiving financial support from the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, as well as for health systems strengthening and reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health. Total funds disbursed in the Region have so far amounted to about US\$ 1.9 billion. Target 3.3 of Sustainable Development Goal 3 is to end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases by 2030 and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases. Achieving this target requires strong partnership between WHO, the Global Fund, and other health partners, as well as innovative approaches to reach all people and ensure that no one is left behind.

In that context, the Middle East response initiative was introduced by the Global Fund to improve responsiveness to the three diseases in the context of emergencies in Jordan, Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. The initiative has three guiding principles – flexibility, partnership and innovation – to facilitate implementation under challenging operating environments. Agreement has been signed between the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and the International Organization for Migration to provide coordination and technical support to countries to implement programmes for grant funding for 2017–2018. WHO in the Syrian Arab Republic signed an agreement as subrecipient and it is currently the main implementer of the grant. WHO in Lebanon has also signed an agreement as subrecipient. The WHO Regional Office has provided technical support and coordinated development of the proposal for another grant for three years, including Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. The proposal was based on reviews for the three programmes in these countries. A funding request for implementation of the other grant was submitted on 6 August 2018.

Within the strategic framework for collaboration, which aims to strengthen collaboration between the two organizations, cooperation and financing agreements have been signed, amounting to an estimated US\$ 50 million, to provide technical support to countries to fight HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria, and to make significant progress towards achieving universal health coverage. Part of the agreement is strategic initiative resilient and sustainable systems for health (RSSH) 1.3 “Technical Support, South-to-South Collaboration, Peer Review and Learning”, which involves conducting four cross-cutting global workshops focusing on equitable access to quality health

services, integrating systems and services, preparing countries for transition from the Global Fund and innovation – technologies and service delivery strategies. A regional working group has been established by the Regional Office, comprising relevant technical programmes, to coordinate operationalization of the strategic framework within the Region.

Challenges in the Region

Despite significant gains made in the fight against the three diseases, substantial challenges remain and threaten the gains of the last 15 years. Insecurity and political upheaval are key issues that hinder timely implementation of Global Fund grant agreements. Several challenges are being faced in implementation of activities, especially the HIV component, in Yemen. Additional challenges include limited and frequent turnover of human resources, lack of WHO sustained technical support in priority high-burden countries and decreasing resources from the Global Fund, as well as limited resources received from other donors.

Innovative approaches and flexible measures are required to accelerate implementation of activities and conduct timely reprogramming. The Global Fund's risk appetite framework defines the amount of risk that the organization is willing to accept in pursuit of achieving its strategic objectives and helps drive more efficient, risk-adjusted resource allocation in challenging operating environments.

Expected outcomes

- Encouragement of the effective involvement of Member States in shaping the strategic partnership with the Global Fund.
- Identification of implementation challenges of Global Fund activities in the concerned countries.
- Identification of ways to optimize the outcome of the partnership between countries, WHO and the Global Fund.

Participants

- Representative of ministries of health of countries eligible for Global Fund financing, including Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Yemen.
- Global Fund secretariat team.
- Partner organizations, including United Nations agencies involved in Global Fund activities and civil society.