

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

September 2018

**REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE *GLOBAL VECTOR
CONTROL RESPONSE 2017–2030***

Objective of the event

The objective of this session is to:

- reach agreement on the need to endorse a regional plan of action to support countries to develop an integrated and comprehensive approach to vector control and surveillance for implementation of the *Global Vector Control Response 2017–2030*.

Background

Vector-borne diseases are a significant cause of morbidity and mortality in WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region. The major vector-borne diseases include malaria, dengue fever, chikungunya, yellow fever, leishmaniasis, schistosomiasis, lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis and Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever. Malaria continues to cause significant morbidity and mortality in eight endemic countries. WHO estimates that in 2016 there were 4.2 million cases of malaria in the Region and 8200 malaria deaths. Emerging arboviral diseases, especially dengue and chikungunya, principally transmitted by *Aedes aegypti*, are of public health concern in at least eight countries that report major outbreaks with the risk of outbreaks spreading to other countries. *Aedes* mosquitoes are also responsible for the major outbreaks of yellow fever reported from Sudan. Another important vector of arboviruses, the invasive *Aedes albopictus*, has spread to Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Pakistan and Syrian Arab Republic, increasing the potential for dengue fever and other arboviral infections to spread to more countries in the Region. Leishmaniasis, a vector-borne disease transmitted by sandflies, and also a neglected tropical disease, is of public health significance and endemic in 18 countries in the Region, where it accounts for the highest burden (57%) of cutaneous leishmaniasis worldwide. More than 100 000 new cases are reported annually and this represents a tremendous social and economic burden.

Vector control plays a crucial role in the prevention and control of many vector-borne diseases and has one of the highest returns on investment in public health. The vital role of vector control in reducing the burden of these diseases, including malaria and arboviral diseases, such as dengue and chikungunya, is well documented. However, as social, demographic and environmental factors have resulted in intensification, geographical spread and extension of transmission seasons or re-emergence of vector-borne diseases in recent years the need for strengthened capacity for vector surveillance and control is crucial. Key challenges facing the Region include a lack of clear policies, strategies and plans for an integrated approach and poor vector surveillance capacity as a result of a limited number facilities for capacity development and training. Local evidence to support decision-making for effective vector control is also limited as insufficient financial resources are allocated to support basic and applied research. In addition, civil unrest, migration, unplanned urbanization, lack of piped water supply, inadequate solid waste management and climate change have put large populations at increased risk of vector-borne diseases. Insecticide resistance is also increasing in intensity and geographical distribution in many endemic countries.

The global burden of emerging and re-emerging vector-borne diseases led to the development of the *Global Vector Control Response 2017–2030*, which provides a new strategy to strengthen vector control worldwide through increased capacity, improved surveillance, better coordination and integrated action. The document provides strategic guidance to countries to strengthen vector control as a fundamental approach to preventing disease and responding to outbreaks. It supports implementation of a comprehensive approach that will enable the achievement of disease-specific national and global goals and contribute towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It promotes the principles of integrated vector management, defined as a rational decision-making process for the optimal use of resources for vector control, seeking to improve the efficacy, cost-effectiveness, ecological soundness and sustainability of vector control operations.

The strategy was endorsed by Member States at the Seventieth World Health Assembly in May 2017 and resolution WHA70.16 was adopted to support this approach. It urges Member States to develop or adapt, as appropriate, existing national vector control strategies and operational plans to align them to the strategic approach for integrated global vector control and response.

The draft regional plan of action for implementation of the *Global Vector Control Response* was developed following the conducting of situation analysis and needs assessment in countries of the Region to assess vector surveillance and control capacity and needs. The findings of these assessments were reviewed by experts in a consultation meeting in Tunisia in June 2018. The draft regional plan of action will be shared widely with Member States and experts in August 2018 for additional input and to develop set of recommendations.

Expected outcome

1. Agreement reached on the need to endorse the regional plan of action to support countries to develop an integrated and comprehensive approach to vector control and surveillance for the implementation of the *Global Vector Control Response 2017–2030*.