



**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN**

20 September 2015

**Sixty-second Session
Kuwait city, Kuwait, 5-8 October 2015**

**ANNOTATED AGENDA FOR TECHNICAL MEETINGS
5 October 2015**

1. Nursing and midwifery in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: challenges and prospects

Nurses and midwives constitute 50% to 60% of the health workforce in the Region. Therefore, it is important that information on nursing and evidence on the economic value and contribution of nurses and midwives in the provision of quality, cost-effective and accessible care in a multitude of settings are integrated into national health systems and policy decisions on health care. The availability of nurses and midwives who are prepared and able to lead in regional health priority areas is critical. Results from the online Eastern Mediterranean nursing and midwifery survey identified key challenges for nursing and midwifery in the Region. Among the lessons learned through work with countries in recent years are that numerous strategies have to be adopted and a wide range of options undertaken if nursing and midwifery is to be strengthened in the Region and that lessons learnt from international experience should feed into actions formulated to address key regional challenges. The session will brief Member States on the key challenges facing nursing and midwifery in the Region; and suggest feasible, high impact, relevant and cost-effective actions to address these challenges

2. Health technology assessment (HTA): a tool for evidence-informed decision-making in health

Health technology assessment (HTA) is a multidisciplinary decision-making process that uses information about the medical (clinical), social, economic, organizational and ethical issues related to the use of a health technology (such as medicines, vaccines, biologicals, medical devices and clinical interventions) in a systematic, transparent, unbiased and robust manner. It aims to support the formulation of safe and effective health policies that are patient-focused and seek to achieve best value of money and improved patient health outcomes. WHO can provide guidance on the implementation of national HTA programmes and support capacity-building in the use of HTA methodologies and approaches, which will contribute to health system strengthening and progress to universal health coverage. The session will provide Member States with a broader understanding of the importance of HTA as a new and integrated tool for routinely evaluating new and emerging health technologies as well as information on the next steps for establishment of national initiatives.

3. Social health insurance for universal health coverage

Evidence suggests that establishing prepayment and pooling arrangements and limiting reliance on direct out-of-pocket payments are necessary conditions to achieve universal coverage. Countries can choose from among multiple prepayment arrangements that include allocations from general government revenues, obligatory health insurance, voluntary health insurance and medical saving accounts. The session provides information on the most up-to-

date thinking in health care financing with focus on the role of social health insurance as a mechanism to progress towards universal health coverage. It identifies the elements of social health insurance and indicates the structural and operational features that need to be taken into consideration in designing and implementing successful social health insurance schemes. It will also provide an overview of the status of social health insurance implementation in the Region.

4. Regional malaria action plan (2016–2020)

The WHO global technical strategy for malaria 2016-2030 provides a comprehensive framework for countries to develop tailored programmes that will sustain and accelerate progress towards malaria elimination. The complementary strategy developed by the Roll Back Malaria RBM Partnership Action and investment to defeat malaria 2016-2030 highlights the need for further and continued investment in malaria control and elimination in the coming 15 years. The session will provide a briefing on these strategies, the regional achievements and challenges in malaria control and elimination, and the regional action plan to operationalize the global technical strategy.

5. Food safety perspectives in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

The WHO regional Centre for Environmental Health Action (CEHA) conducted food safety assessment and profiling missions in 15 countries of the Region in July-September 2015. The aim was to assess strengths and weaknesses in the national food safety systems and to delineate priority development actions required to address identified gaps. Special focus was placed on the public health aspects of national food safety systems, in line with the mandate of WHO of building institutional capacities to prevent, detect and manage foodborne health risks and outbreaks. The session will highlight the role of the health sector in leading and engaging in multisectoral initiatives to improve food safety in the Region.

6. Social determinants of health

In 2008, the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health produced an extensive prescription for what is required to “close the gap” across all sectors of society. The World Health Assembly resolved to put its recommendations into practice (WHA62.14). The 2011 World Conference on Social Determinants of Health in Brazil, resulted in the Rio Political Declaration on Social Determinants of Health which was endorsed by the World Health Assembly (WHA65.8). The Regional Committee at its 61st Session requested WHO to prepare a regional strategy/strategic directions with an action-oriented framework for country plans of action that take into consideration country differences. It also recommended an intercountry meeting to discuss strategic directions and develop a clear vision on the way forward to be presented to the 62nd Session of the Regional Committee. The session will update Member States on the work done in the area of social determinants of health since the 61st Session of the Regional Committee and agree on the way forward.