

---

## **Report of the third meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee to the Regional Director**

### **1. Introduction**

1. The Technical Advisory Committee to the Regional Director convened for the third meeting on 10–11 September 2015 at the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean in Cairo, Egypt. The objectives of the meeting were to solicit the advice of the Committee and other experts in attendance on:

- matters relating to the implementation and evaluation of WHO's strategic directions in the Eastern Mediterranean Region;
- measures to strengthen the capacity of the Regional Office and country offices in support of Member States;
- policies and strategies for the development of technical cooperation among and between countries of the Region;
- means to engage key stakeholders from the health and non-health sectors in order to promote the concept of "health in all policies";
- any other topics referred by the Regional Director.

2. Six members of the Committee and an additional five experts attended the meeting, along with relevant staff of the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean.

3. During the meeting, the participants were requested to discuss a number of working papers that had been provided to them in advance of the meeting. The discussions included identification of any additional challenges that existed and advice on how WHO could best respond, within the current context of the Region which includes ongoing crises in a number of countries.

### **2. Recommendations**

4. The Technical Advisory Committee made the following recommendations for WHO's work in the Region.

#### *General*

- Document, analyse and share the regional experience in dealing with crisis in Member States.
- Ensure that scaling up the work in emergencies is possible through prioritization within the priority areas of workselves.
- Continue to recruit new talented staff and work on ensuring recruitment of highly experienced consultants.
- Encourage the participation of regional experts and professionals when international institutions and experts are involved in an initiative, in order to build capacity and exchange experiences.
- Continue to work on cross-fertilization among different technical programmes.

#### *In the area of health system strengthening*

- Encourage work in the area of diagnostics as an important element in achieving universal health coverage by integrating diagnostics and health technology into health systems.
- Scale up self-care and patient participation as important elements of health care, in addition to patient safety.

- Consolidate efforts to understand the current situation on hospitals in the Region and increase investment in building an evidence base and sharing experiences in hospital management, without compromising the work on primary health care.
- Ensure the provision of different health financing models and options to guide countries in adopting solutions based on their own specific situation and needs.
- Focus on approaches to improve access to health care for vulnerable situations and for refugee and IDP populations.
- Examine the status of legislation related to universal health coverage- in Member States.

*In the area of health information systems*

- Continue with the two initiatives on civil registration and vital statistics and health information system framework and core indicators, which should remain top priorities for WHO's work with Member States.
- Update the Regional Committee on countries that are not reporting on the core indicators.
- Ensure there is complementarity between the core indicators and those identified for the comprehensive health examination survey that is currently being piloted in Tunisia.
- Urge countries to allocate resources for strengthening health information systems, particularly for financing the generation of essential reliable data.
- Encourage countries to consider mobile technologies, electronic health records and data linkage systems in strengthening health information systems.

*In the area of essential public health functions*

- Review the process of conducting an assessment of essential public health functions with emphasis on engaging non-health sectors and emphasize national ownership and full engagement of high-level policy makers.
- Consider the establishment of regional network of institutions in the area of essential public health functions.
- Consider including the assessment of universal health coverage within the assessment of essential public health functions.

*In the area of maternal and child health*

- Continue with the "Saving the lives of mothers and children" initiative, document successful experiences in countries and strengthen work with partners in this area.
- Conduct in-depth analysis on constraints in implementation and ways to effectively support progress in some countries that have not met MDG 4 and 5 targets.
- Consider an initiative to improve maternal and child health in countries with low maternal and child mortality.

*In the area of health security*

- Support countries to enhance health system resilience and develop a framework to assess the resilience of health systems.
- Continue to emphasize the importance of meeting core capacities and compliance with the International Health Regulations 2005 (IHR), with emphasis on supporting countries in the area of "points of entry".
- Share the Regional Office's work with countries on the objective assessment of IHR core competencies with the rest of WHO and take the lead in calling for this to become a regular part of the process.

- Emphasize antimicrobial resistance as an integral component of health security rather than a standalone initiative.
- Develop an accurate situation analysis on the magnitude and characteristics of antimicrobial resistance in the Region, by engaging research institutions to strengthen data collection.
- Focus on developing guidelines on the rational and effective use of antibiotics tailored to the context of the Region.

*In the area of noncommunicable diseases*

- Focus prevention interventions on clear understanding of the contribution of traditional food patterns on calorie intake.
- Reactivate the work to develop community demonstration programmes on healthy lifestyles.
- Focus on the rational use of medicines based on efficacy, safety and cost-effectiveness criteria.
- Consider working with effective partners in the area of guideline development and adaptation, to provide updated guidance to Member States on evidence-based management of common conditions and to avoid duplication of efforts.
- Enhance WHO's work on strengthening the labelling of food products and consumer awareness.
- Maintain the focus on links between maternal and child health and noncommunicable diseases, for the prevention of obesity in children.
- Play a proactive role in bringing ministries of health and ministries of finance together to encourage taking a stand on tobacco taxation, both within and between countries.
- Highlight the issue of stigma in mental health – and provide more guidance on addressing it in the Region.

*In the area of sustainable development goals*

- Include “collective responsibility” as a major principle in implementing the sustainable development goals.
- Conduct analysis to define the role of non-health sectors in achieving targets of goal 3 on health, particularly with regard to gender equity and poverty reduction.
- Review the indicators of the 16 non-health goals, focusing on the health-related issues and recognizing the importance of health equity.
- Consider a regional plan for implementation of the sustainable development goals in terms of health.

*In the area of emergencies*

- Explore mechanisms to keep donors interested, especially regional donors, to help ensure sustainability of the regional solidarity fund.
- Discuss with the Regional Committee an increase of funding for the regional solidarity fund.
- Share the experience of dealing with emergencies from a health and humanitarian perspective with others, through international meetings/conferences and publications (of a qualitative nature).
- Advocate for the health of mothers and children and mental health interventions during emergencies.
- Invest in analysing the role of nongovernmental organizations in facilitating the access to services during times of crisis and in hard-to-reach areas.

*In the area of family medicine*

- Continue the work in this important area and develop a more in-depth analysis of the current situation, with better understanding of what is happening in each country.
- Consider producing a set of options for each of the three groups of countries, rather than general recommendations that may not be relevant to some countries.
- Collect experiences and best practices at global level.