



Address by

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to the

**THIRD ANNUAL INTERCOUNTRY MEETING OF MATERNAL AND CHILD
HEALTH PROGRAMME IN THE REGION**

Amman, Jordan, 11–14 September 2017

Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have great pleasure in welcoming you to the third intercountry meeting of maternal and child health programme managers in the Region, starting today in this lively city of Amman.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Government of Jordan as well as H.E. Dr Mahmoud Al-Sheyab, Minister of Health, for the warm welcome and for hosting this meeting here in Amman. I also wish to express my sincere thanks to our distinguished experts and guests for responding positively to our invitation to this technical meeting, organized jointly with UNICEF and UNFPA along with our remaining partners from H6 group, namely UNAIDS, UN WOMEN and The World Bank.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This third intercountry meeting represents a crucial opportunity for national maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health programme managers and experts from regional and global levels to fulfil our joint mission of ensuring that every newborn, mother and child in our region not only survives, but thrives. The purpose of this meeting is to enable countries to accelerate efforts towards achieving relevant targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, and to promote transfer of knowledge and expertise to Member States in collaboration with the H6 agencies.

As you all know, maternal and child health improved substantially in the Eastern Mediterranean Region during the era of the MDGs. Between 1990 and 2015 maternal mortality fell by 54%, from 362 to 166 per 100 000 live births, while under-five mortality fell by 48%. These achievements were accomplished by Member States in collaboration with UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO, who jointly promoted lifesaving and high impact interventions and launched the Dubai initiative on Saving the Lives of Mothers and Children in the Eastern Mediterranean Region in January 2013.

The Eastern Mediterranean Region is marked by clear disparities in indicators for maternal and child health. Nine Member States account for 95% of the maternal and child mortality in the Region.

Two years have passed since the launch of the Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health. Yet the Region continues to experience conflicts and emergencies affecting more than 50% of our countries directly or indirectly, and resulting in death, displacement and devastation for millions of people in the Region.

To respond to this situation, all partners jointly with Member States need to accelerate the pace of implementing evidence-based, cost-effective interventions for reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health, with an emphasis on quality of care and measurement tools to assess progress in moving towards the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. To achieve this objective, a regional partnership has been expanded to bring together all agencies working on health under the umbrella of H6. This partnership starts with higher and stronger commitment to reach the SDGs and the objectives of the Global Strategy. In this regard, a joint statement will be signed by the six agencies to reiterate their dedication towards the cause of women's, children's and adolescents' health in the Region.

Earlier this year the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean developed a roadmap to guide WHO's work in the Region for the period 2017–2021. Maternal, child and adolescent health is one of five technical priorities in the Region in the coming five years together with health in emergency settings, health system strengthening, communicable and noncommunicable diseases.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This intercountry meeting will provide us with an opportunity to develop our collective vision of maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health in the Region, while also developing a shared understanding of the regional priorities and our roles at the country level.

As well, this meeting offers an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to improve the health and well-being of all women, newborns, children and adolescents in our Region. I call upon all Member States and partners to continue working together towards this noble goal.

Again, I would like to thank you all for participating, and I look forward to a successful event. I also wish you an enjoyable stay in Amman.