



*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

**Opening remarks**

to the

**FIFTH GLOBAL MEETING OF WHO HEADS OF TRANSLATION SERVICES**

**Cairo, Egypt, 22-24 March 2010**

Dear Colleagues,

WHO has great responsibilities in global health, in providing technical support to countries, and in providing people with the most up-to-date and valid health information in their own language. This would not be possible without your efforts in translation services.

Your meeting today, in the Annual Global Meeting of WHO Heads of Translation Services in WHO, is a valuable opportunity to present the global picture of translation services in WHO, to point out the weaknesses and strengths in this important area, and to study the possibility of providing better services to governing bodies in headquarters and Regional Offices, and to health professionals in countries. It is clear that previous meetings and the current meeting have items in common, namely multilingualism, quality control, recruitment of professional translators, computer-assisted translation, terminology management, and tracking the flow of work. However, within those themes you have also succeeded over the past four years in exploring the specific concerns of each major office in WHO. This was made possible through moving your meeting venue from WHO headquarters, where the first and third meetings were held in 2006 and 2008, to EURO, Copenhagen, where the second meeting was held in 2007, and to PAHO, Washington, DC, for the fourth meeting in 2009. Today, I am pleased to welcome you to the fifth meeting here in EMRO, Cairo, in 2010.

Thanks to your active contribution in these meetings, and to your close follow-up of the recommendations, the major offices in WHO have benefited a lot; the differences among them have become fewer, the needs have become more clearly defined, and all offices have moved along the same track to ensure information is available in the most appropriate format.

The current organizational structure of the Regional Office places language services high in the organigram. The Global Arabic Programme reports directly to me as the Regional Director, with daily work follow-up through the Assistant Regional Director. Editorial services and French translation staff work together with graphic designers and web designers in the Editorial, Graphics and Publishing Support unit. The role of the Publications Committee is extremely clear in promoting the spirit of publishing and ensuring dissemination of quality information to the countries, enforcing publishing policies, and facilitating process and procedures.

Being in Cairo with us, even for short time, gives us in EMRO a unique opportunity to have your views, advice and help to enhance the work environment, to make the current practices more responsive to the information needs in the three working languages in the Regional Office, Arabic, English and French, and in the national languages, particularly Farsi, Pashtu, Dari and Kurdish. We will not restrict our efforts to this meeting room. Rather we invite you to feel free to visit us in our offices, and in the library, printshop, information technology and EMHJ. We will all be glad to hear your proposals in areas of potential improvement.

I welcome you here and wish you a positive and productive meeting, as well as an enjoyable stay in Cairo.