مشروع قـــرار
Draft resolution

REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

EM/RC70/R.X(D)
October 2023

Seventieth session
Agenda item 3(b)

Strengthening public health readiness for mass gatherings in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

The Regional Committee,

Having reviewed the technical paper on Strengthening public health readiness for mass gatherings in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, including the proposed regional framework presented in Annex 1,[1] and the annual progress reports on the implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) in the Region, and recognizing the varying capacities of countries and territories of the Region to implement the International Health Regulations (2005) and discrepancies in health system capacities;

Mindful of the complex and challenging situation in the Eastern Mediterranean Region due to conflict, social unrest, political instability and economic constraints, along with the resulting disruption of the health care system, human migration and forced displacement;

Expressing concern regarding the potential emergence of various public health threats during mass gatherings, including but not limited to infectious diseases with the potential for cross-border transmission, noncommunicable diseases and other health risks arising from environmental and host-related factors, in addition to natural, accidental and deliberate hazards;

Understanding that many countries in the Region host planned and unplanned mass gatherings of different sizes and nature, each carrying its unique set of risks, and the increasing international attendance at many such events, as well as the varying capacities to manage large-scale mass gatherings;

Taking into account the impact of COVID-19, which necessitated the cancellation, postponement, modification and restriction of mass gathering events, and highlighting the need for a risk-based approach that effectively balances public health measures with the socioeconomic contexts of countries;

Recognizing the importance of sharing and disseminating best practices and lessons learned from mass gatherings among countries and territories, aiming to foster knowledge exchange, promote collaboration and enhance the collective capacity of the Region in effectively managing mass gatherings;

Recognizing the highly successful conduct of large-scale mass gathering events by several countries in the Region, characterized by careful planning, preparedness and the implementation of mitigation measures, despite the COVID-19 pandemic and other challenges;

---

[1] EM/RC70/4.

Recognizing that effective management and all-hazard preparedness and planning for public health risks during mass gatherings require leadership and a comprehensive and coordinated approach, involving various stakeholders, including public health authorities, event organizers, local communities, health care providers and the relevant governmental agencies to ensure the safe conduct of events;

Emphasizing the need for countries in the Region to enhance their capacities and capabilities in effectively managing mass gatherings, including in areas of risk assessment, command, control and communication, all-hazard preparedness and response, early warning, surveillance and information management, points of entry and cross-border collaboration, risk communication and community engagement, and generating legacy and exchange of experience;

Stressing the importance of integrating public health considerations into the overall event planning and management process;

1. **ENDORSES** the Framework for strengthening public health readiness for mass gatherings in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2023–2028;

2. **URGES Member States to:** enhance public health readiness for mass gathering events to minimize public health risks and ensure the safety of events, and to integrate the capacities developed during these events into longer-term health system strengthening activities, by implementing the actions laid out in the Framework, including:

    2.1 Establishing and promoting command, control and communication (C3) structures, with the engagement of stakeholders, ensuring clear roles and responsibilities during mass gatherings;

    2.2 Integrating comprehensive risk assessment into mass gathering planning, effectively mitigating and minimizing potential public health risks associated with the events, and developing contingency plans that address all identified risks;

    2.3 Strengthening public health and health system capacity to prevent, prepare for, detect and respond to public health risks posed by mass gatherings, including enhancing early warning functions of existing surveillance systems, promoting the use of innovations and digital technologies and applications across the different public health interventions, and strengthening capacities to manage mass casualties in pre-hospital and hospital settings;

    2.4 Establishing capacity-building programmes to ensure the availability of skilled workforce at the national and subnational levels to manage public health risks that may arise during mass gatherings and ensuring the availability of resources and logistical support;

    2.5 Collaborating and sharing experiences in the field of mass gathering readiness, including through the establishment of a regional network or platform for exchanging information, expertise and best practices to enhance regional and global cooperation and coordination in this crucial area of public health;

    2.6 Developing a public health research agenda for mass gatherings to generate evidence to inform public health interventions, including documentation of best practices and organizing scientific conferences to exchange knowledge and inform public health preparedness and readiness;

3.   **REQUESTS the Regional Director to:**

3.1   Support Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region to adapt, implement and monitor the regional operational framework at country level;

3.2   Provide technical support to Member States in the Region, as needed, in developing and implementing risk-based approaches and to strengthen their capacity and preparedness for managing public health risks during mass gatherings;

3.3   Provide technical support to enhance the capacity of countries and facilitate cross-border and regional collaboration to promote the exchange of experiences during mass gatherings and country-to-country support and learning;

3.4   Report on progress to the Regional Committee at its 72nd, 74th and 76th sessions.