

Cairo, 21 May 2023 – The regional meeting on integrated disease surveillance (IDS) in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and workshop on the open-source District Health Information Software (DHIS2) as an electronic platform for IDS was convened by an inter-departmental Technical Working Group on IDS 14–18 May 2023 in Cairo, Egypt.

The first regional meeting on IDS aimed to assess the current surveillance situation, guide countries in developing national implementation plans and establish a monitoring and evaluation framework for IDS. Ministries of health, WHO country offices, as well as partners, participated in the meeting.

The objectives of the meeting were to:

update countries on the recent steps taken to support the adoption of IDS;

identify best practices, challenges and lessons learned on the IDS implementation in the Region, including in polio transition;

assess countries against benchmarks for IDS as outlined in the Regional Committee paper;

develop a roadmap of key actions to be taken at the country level and obtain consensus on national IDS coordination and monitoring mechanisms;

ensure IDS strategies are conducted as part of an integrated national health information system (HIS); and

support the strengthening of national electronic surveillance systems using DHIS2.

Dr Ahmed Al Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, inaugurated the meeting. He emphasized the importance of an IDS system and having a single electronic data platform for early detection, reporting and response to public health threats. He expressed confidence in the commitment of countries in making towards achieving successful IDS implementation.

The meeting entailed interactive presentations and information sharing by WHO, countries and partners in plenary sessions followed by discussions and group work. The meeting was held in a hybrid format, with participants able to attend virtually as well. The plenary sessions include presentations on major challenges for IDS and proposed solutions, surveillance workforce and engagement of stakeholders in the IDS.

The meeting concluded with over 90 participants from 22 countries and 9 partner organizations working together to draft a roadmap for successfully implementing IDS guided by the 10 domains of the regional strategy.

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