

Eastern Mediterranean health MEETINGS

Regional Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases

WHO's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean organized a Regional Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases in Cairo from 26 to 29 November 1995. The purpose of the conference was to exchange experience/information about important emerging infectious diseases in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region and discuss methods of promoting their surveillance as an essential element for their prevention, early detection and control. The conference was attended by more than 100 senior officials from all countries of the Region who are involved in the control of communicable diseases. Responsible officers from regional WHO collaborative centres in the fields of communicable diseases also participated and a number of interested observers from universities and research institutions. Experts from Canada, Egypt, Germany, India, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and the United States made the technical presentations. The number of participants was around two hundred. This special issue of the *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal* is devoted to the subject of emerging and re-emerging diseases and contains a number of the presentations delivered at the conference, as well as the text of the Regional plan for the preparation and control of emerging diseases in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

Meeting of EPI lagging countries

The WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean convened a meeting for EPI lagging countries in Cairo from 1 to 2 December 1995. The objective of the meeting was to assess progress made since the Inter-country Meeting in Bahrain, which was held from 27 to 31 May 1995, to discuss problems hindering achievements of higher immunization coverage and recommend solutions. The governments of Afghanistan, Djibouti, Pakistan, Sudan and the Republic of Yemen nominated participants to this activity.

The Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean

The Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean is the governing body of the World Health Organization in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. The Regional Director is the Secretary of this Committee, which convenes once every year to review World Health Organization's collaborative programmes with countries of the Region, discuss the implementation of the programme budget and draw up work plans for the future.

The Regional Committee held its Forty-second session in Cairo, Egypt, from 1 to 4 October 1995. Its agenda included an annual report by the Regional Director on the work of WHO in the Eastern Mediterranean

Region for the year 1994. Several technical subjects were discussed in detail, including health systems development, promotion of quality assurance of health care, prevention and control of blindness in the Region, ethics of medicine and health, and elimination of leprosy. Furthermore, the Regional Committee agreed to undertake the responsibility for nomination of suitable candidates to be awarded Dr A.T. Shousha Foundation Prizes and Fellowships in future years. The Committee decided to transfer the WHO Regional Office from Alexandria to Cairo and to accept a plot of land offered by the Egyptian Government to WHO for this purpose. The Forty-third session of the Regional Committee will be held in Lahore, Pakistan, from 6 to 9 October 1996.

Twelfth Meeting of the Regional Director with WHO Representatives and the Regional Office staff

The annual meeting of the Regional Director with WHO Representatives and the Regional Office staff was held in the Regional Office building in Alexandria, Egypt, from 17 to 20 September 1995. The meeting was also attended by the Special Representative of the Director-General for Near Eastern Affairs and Director of Health for UNRWA and Dr Y. Kawaguchi, Director of the Division of Interagency Affairs at WHO headquarters. This meeting provides an annual opportunity for the Regional Director to review with WHO Representatives and his senior staff the WHO collaborative programmes in countries of the Eastern Mediterranean, to exchange experiences, identify successes and problems, and endeavour to streamline operations and make the best use of the available resources. The

meeting's agenda this year was rich with important issues such as poliomyelitis eradication, Regional Health Database, evaluation of WHO-supported national training activities, status of environmental health strategy and plan of action for environmental health in countries of the Region, and World Bank support in the field of health. Success stories such as the role of countries during emergencies were reviewed with special reference to the situation in the Republic of Yemen and Afghanistan. The thirteenth meeting was held from 25 to 29 August 1996.

IEA Eastern Mediterranean Regional Meeting

The International Epidemiological Association (IEA) branch in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Epidemiology Department of the High Institute of Public Health (HIPH), Alexandria University, Alexandria, Egypt, organized this meeting in Alexandria from 1 to 4 September 1995. Hosted by the HIPH, the meeting was cosponsored by WHO's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, UNICEF's Child Survival Project, the Egyptian Ministry of Health, the National Epidemiology Committee and the Clinical Epidemiology Unit, Suez Canal University, Egypt. The meeting was attended by some 200 participants from 14 countries in the Region. The programme included seven plenary sessions and 85 oral/poster presentations. The discussions covered a wide range of subjects of epidemiological interest, such as the future prospects of epidemiology in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, the epidemiology of emerging diseases, the epidemiology of noncommunicable diseases, teaching epidemiology. A number of important field studies were also reviewed. The meeting was an important gathering in which

epidemiologists shared their experiences and updated their information. The next meeting of the IEA in the Eastern Mediterranean Region will be held in Beirut, Lebanon, from 23 to 26 October 1997. The organizer is the Lebanese Epidemiological Association (LEA) and the contact point is Dr Rafik Baddoura, LEA's president, at the following address:

Rheumatology Department,
Hôtel Dieu de France,
Beirut, Lebanon
Fax: +9611 386 796

Regional Working Group Meeting on Malaria Control

The WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean organized a Regional Working Group Meeting on Malaria Control in the Regional Office in Alexandria, Egypt, from 29 October to 2 November 1995. The objective was to assess the progress made and problems encountered in the reorientation of the national malaria control programmes as per the recommendations of the Regional Working Group on Malaria Control, April 1994, and to propose specific strategies and action to accelerate the implementation of the malaria control strategy in various types of epidemiological situations prevailing in the Region. The governments of the 22 countries of the Region nominated participants to attend this activity.

Intercountry Facilitator Training Workshop on Managing Tuberculosis Control at District Level

The WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, in collaboration with the

Government of Lebanon, organized an Intercountry Facilitator Training Workshop on Managing Tuberculosis Control at District Level in Beirut from 14 to 18 October 1995. The objective was to train the national participants, as future facilitators, on the WHO training modules for managing tuberculosis control at district level, and it is expected that the trained facilitators will, on return home, continue to train national health personnel engaged in tuberculosis control. The governments of Bahrain, Cyprus, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and the Syrian Arab Republic were invited to attend.

Regional Workshop on Integrated Disease Vector Control

The WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office, in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan, organized a Regional Workshop on Integrated Disease Vector Control in Lahore from 14 to 19 October 1995. The purposes were: to follow up the World Health Assembly resolutions and the Regional Committee recommendations on vector biology and malaria control; to assess the present status of integrated disease vector control in the Region; to introduce the latest techniques; to promote sustainable implementation of integrated disease vector control through primary health care and maximum community participation; and to stimulate preparation of guidelines and plans of action for the implementation of integrated disease vector control in Member States. The Governments of Afghanistan, Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and the Republic of Yemen were invited to participate.

Intercountry Workshop on HIV Counselling

In collaboration with the government of Lebanon an Intercountry Workshop on HIV Counselling was held in Beirut from 25 to 28 April 1995. The purpose was to review the current status of HIV counselling in Member States, to review the need for and methods of HIV counselling, and to prepare a plan for developing and strengthening HIV counselling. Ten countries of the Region nominated candidates to participate in the workshop.

Intercountry Workshop on AIDS Education at the Workplace

The WHO Regional Office, in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan, organized an Intercountry Workshop on AIDS Education at the Workplace in Lahore from 28 to 30 August 1995.

The workshop objectives were to:

- review the current activities of AIDS education in the workplace in the Region;
- review the policies, strategies and methods for AIDS education in the workplace;
- develop a step-by-step methodology for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of AIDS education activities in the workplace;
- provide opportunities to develop skills in conducting AIDS education in the workplace; and
- prepare draft country work plans on AIDS education in the workplace.

Participants from Cyprus, Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and the Republic of Yemen attended the meeting.

Intercountry Workshop on AIDS Education in Schools

The WHO Regional Office, in collaboration with the Government of Egypt, organized an Intercountry Workshop on AIDS Education in Schools in Cairo from 11 to 15 September 1995.

The objectives were to:

- review the current activities in AIDS education in schools implemented at country level in the Eastern Mediterranean Region;
- highlight the educational and sociocultural characteristics of youth in school in the Eastern Mediterranean Region;
- identify policies, strategies and activities related to AIDS education in schools;
- develop a methodology for managing AIDS education in schools; and
- outline a framework for future action at country level in AIDS education in schools.

The workshop was attended by 35 participants from 19 countries of the Region.

Intercountry Workshop on Evaluation of National AIDS Programmes

The WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office, in collaboration with the Government of Cyprus, organized an Intercountry Workshop on Evaluation of National AIDS Programmes in Nicosia, Cyprus, from 22 to 25 August 1995. The purpose was to review the process of evaluation of national AIDS programmes; to orient the participants about the use of prevention and care indicators for evaluation; and to develop a plan of action for evaluation of the national AIDS programmes using these indicators. The Govern-

ments of Cyprus, Djibouti, Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia nominated participants to this activity.

First meeting of the Regional Commission for the Certification of the Eradication of Poliomyelitis

WHO's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean held the first meeting of the Regional Commission for the Certification of the Eradication of Poliomyelitis at WHO EMRO in Alexandria from 23 to 24 September 1995. The purpose was to acquaint members with the polio eradication initiative, the strategies, basic principles, essential criteria and the documentation needed for certification of poliomyelitis eradication; to examine ways through which national/subregional and regional eradication of poliomyelitis may be certified; to specify links between global and national commission; and to develop a work plan with activities and suggested functional duties. Experts from Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Tunisia attended the meeting.

Eighteenth Session of the Eastern Mediterranean Advisory Committee on Health Research

The World Health Organization, in collaboration with the Government of Saudi Arabia, held the Eighteenth Session of the Eastern Mediterranean Advisory Commit-

tee on Health Research in Riyadh from 20 to 22 March 1995. The purpose was to discuss the regional programme for health research and plans for future work. Participants were the Committee Members and experts from the World Health Organization.

Intercountry Workshop on STD Case Management

WHO's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean convened an Intercountry Workshop on STD Case Management in Cairo from 20 to 21 March 1995. The purpose was to review the current sexually transmitted disease situation as well as the STD control activities being carried out in the Region and to discuss and prepare the plan of action for case management of sexually transmitted diseases. The Governments of Bahrain, Cyprus, Djibouti, Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and the Republic of Yemen were invited to nominate participants to this activity.

Workshop on Distance Learning Materials for Safe Blood and Blood Products

WHO's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, in collaboration with the Government of Jordan, held a Workshop on Distance Learning Materials for Safe Blood and Blood Products in Amman from 20 to 24 March 1995. The purpose was to train trainers on distance learning for safe blood and blood products, and to assist national blood programmes to improve the quality

and extent of continuing education and training provision by facilitating the establishment of national distance learning programmes in blood safety.

Participants from Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and the Republic of Yemen attended this activity.

Consultation for the Involvement of Private Sector in Tuberculosis Control

WHO's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, in collaboration with the Government of Lebanon organized a Consultation for the Involvement of Private Sector in Tuberculosis Control in Beirut from 9 to 11 April 1996. The objective was to discuss the expected role of the private sector in tuberculosis control and develop a protocol to strengthen the collaboration between national tuberculosis control programmes and the private sector.

The Governments of Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan and the Syrian Arab Republic were invited to nominate participants in this activity.

Scientific meeting on viral hepatitis

WHO's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, in collaboration with the Government of Egypt organized a scientific meeting on viral hepatitis in Cairo on 25 November 1995. The purpose was to produce recommendations aimed at limiting the spread of infection in the Region. The Gov-

ernment of Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates nominated participants to this meeting.

Regional Conference on Water Supply and Sanitation in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

WHO's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, in collaboration with the Government of Lebanon, organized a Regional Conference on Water Supply and Sanitation in the Eastern Mediterranean Region in Beirut from 11 to 15 December 1995. The objective was to review the status and priority needs of the water supply and sanitation sector in the countries of the Region and to develop long-term technical and managerial support strategies and programmes in four areas: strengthening of water supply and sanitation programmes; drinking-water quality control; reuse of wastewater; and information on technology transfer. A plan of action was developed for closer collaboration between countries on technical and managerial issues and strengthening/establishing of collaborative centres. Participants from most countries of the Region were invited to take part in this activity.

Second Meeting of the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Committee

WHO's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean convened the Second Meeting of the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Committee in Cairo on 3 December 1995. The objective was to review the status of implementation of activities funded

through extrabudgetary funds for EPI/Polio activities in the Region, highlight special needs particularly of countries not yet achieving targets, and to discuss possible donor cooperation in meeting future needs in EPI/Polio as well as other EPI activities. Members of the Centers for Disease Control, Rotary International, UNICEF and WHO met together to discuss the above objective as a continuation of the Meeting of EPI lagging countries (1-2 December 1995).

Intercountry Workshop on the Logistics Management of AIDS Supplies and Condom Social Marketing

WHO's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean in collaboration with the Government of Morocco, organized an Intercountry Workshop on the Logistics Management of AIDS Supplies and Condom Social Marketing in Rabat, Morocco from 13 to 17 November 1995. The objectives of the workshop were to:

- clarify the role of condom programming, including social marketing in prevention and control of AIDS;
- discuss the fundamentals of logistics management, particularly in relation to an STD/AIDS programmes; and
- review the status of AIDS-related supplies at country level.

Experts from Cyprus, Djibouti, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia attended the Workshop.

Workshop on Training of Trainers on Surveillance and Preparedness for Epidemics

WHO's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean organized a Workshop on Training of Trainers on Surveillance and Preparedness for Epidemics in conjunction with the Epidemiology Department of the High Institute of Public Health, Alexandria University, in Alexandria from 18 to 30 December 1995. Participants in the workshop represented 15 Member States. They were all health professionals responsible for establishment, monitoring and evaluation of surveillance systems in their home countries. They will be responsible for training fellow epidemiologists on surveillance and measures to combat epidemics. Country presentations were given and extensive training was received by participants.

Intercountry Cholera Meeting

WHO's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean convened an Intercountry Cholera Meeting in Cairo from 27 to 29 March 1995. The purpose was to provide the participants with up-to-date global and regional information on cholera, share experiences on preparedness for emergencies created by cholera in the Region, improve and coordinate cholera control operations in the Region, and develop and enhance national and intercountry action plans for cholera preparedness and control and for national early response to an outbreak. The meeting was followed by a one day coordination meeting on cholera emergency preparedness and control in the countries of the Horn of Africa, the purpose of which was to share national experiences on the cholera epidemiological situation, problems and

constraints in implementing preparedness and control measures for cholera emergencies in the countries of the Horn of Africa; to enhance national cholera control action and to plan joint intercountry activities and develop strategies for an efficient intercountry coordination of implementation of the cholera preventive and control measures in the countries of the Horn of Africa.

The Governments of the 22 countries of the Region as well as the Control of Diarrhoeal Diseases Advisers from WHO's Regional Offices for Africa and South-east Asia were invited to attend. The participants from Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Kenya attended the coordination meeting on 30 March 1995.