



Regional Director meets with H.E. Minister of Health of Tunisia

During his official visit to Tunisia in May 2017, Dr Mahmoud Fikri, the WHO Regional Director, visited H.E The Minister of Health of Tunisia accompanied by senior advisors. They discussed health system strengthening and WHO's technical support to national health programmes. H.E. the Minister thanked the Regional Director for his visit and expressed her appreciation of the vision of the Regional Director for WHO's work in the Region for the next 5 years, which she said would strengthen the capacity of Member States to address regional strategic health priorities.



Meeting with the parliamentary Health Committee

The Regional Director paid a brief visit to the Parliament of Tunisia during his visit. He met the head of the parliamentary Health Committee and several members of parliament. He highlighted the important role that parliamentarians have to play in developing legislation on health-related issues, such as in tobacco control and road safety. The parliamentarians assured the Regional Director of their full support and requested long-term partnership with WHO so that they were engaged in any key health issues requiring development of a legislative framework.

World Congress on Road Safety

Dr Fikri attended the Thirteenth session of the World Congress on Road Safety which took place in Tunis on Wednesday 3 May 2017. The event was also attended by H.E. Tunisian Prime Minister Yousef El-Shahed. The congress addressed "post-crash response" and highlighted the crucial role of the health sector both in prevention and control of road traffic injuries, deaths and disabilities.



Regional Director chairs joint UNCT Tunisia and Libya meeting

The Regional Director was invited to chair a joint Tunisia/Libya United Nations Country Team meeting in the United Nations Mission office for Libya. The Regional Director was briefed on the humanitarian situation in Libya and the challenges faced by the United Nations and humanitarian actors with respect to funding, access, security and the fragmented political situation, as well as the plight of migrants and refugees passing through Libya. He was also briefed on joint activities in Tunisia and the challenges of limited donor funding to Tunisia as a middle-income country. Tunisia's proximity to Libya was discussed and the possibility of a spillover from the conflict there.

In the context of Libya, the Regional Director stressed the importance of working with United Nations partners to ensure that efforts were not duplicated and resources targeted wisely. The Regional Director discussed WHO, UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme's successful engagement with the World Bank for funding for Yemen which could be replicated in

Libya through submission of a similar funding framework.



Meeting with H.E the Minister of Health of Libya

The Regional Director met with H.E. the Minister of Health of Libya who was accompanied by senior advisors. They discussed support being provided to migrants and refugees and health system strengthening to improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance. An agreement on the reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent strategy was signed between the Ministry of Health and WHO/UNICEF/United Nations Population Fund.



Meeting with Special Representative of the Secretary General

The Regional Director briefly met the Special Representative of the Secretary General to discuss bilateral issues, particularly the implications for WHO if the Secretary General decides to lift the evacuation status and United Nations staff are required to return back to Libya. The Special Representative expressed his appreciation for the work of WHO in Libya and the Regional Director reiterated WHO's continuing support to address health needs in Libya.



Meeting with EU Ambassador to Libya

As the European Union is the biggest donor to WHO for Libya, the Regional Director met the EU Ambassador to Libya to thank her for funding to WHO so that the Organization could better deliver its mandate in Libya. The EU Ambassador expressed her appreciation of the strong relationship between WHO and the EU and highlighted important areas where WHO could help the Libyan population and immigrants to the country, in terms of mental health, capacity-building, disease surveillance, health of migrants, noncommunicable diseases and provision of services through mobile clinics. She said that there was a tendency in Libya for health to have become a victim of politics and WHO and the EU needed to work more closely together to use health as an entry point for peace building. They discussed health advocacy. The Regional Director thanked the EU Ambassador for their trusted partnership and assured her that WHO would continue to nurture this partnership through bilateral cooperation and collaboration.



Meeting with H.E. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tunisia

H.E. the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia hosted the Regional Director and thanked him on behalf of the Government for his visit. They discussed Tunisia as the base for WHO's work in Libya, and global health diplomacy, as the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in global health security has become not only crucial but essential.

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