Health diplomacy

In the area of health governance, an initiative on health diplomacy was launched in 2012 to build capacity in health diplomacy among Member States, with a focus on issues of highest priority and relevance to the Region, and to raise awareness of the value of integrating concepts of health diplomacy into foreign policy.

To date, the WHO Regional Office has convened 5 annual seminars bringing together key players from ministries of health and foreign affairs, diplomats, parliamentarians and experts to discuss key global health issues. This has proved to be a most useful dialogue and has strengthened the relationship between health and foreign policy in the Region.

Health diplomacy is important for the countries of the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region because many of the development issues they face relate directly to health and because it is disproportionately affected by manmade and humanitarian crises. Solutions have to be found to issues that require global action and collaboration across borders, such as Middle East respiratory syndrome, humanitarian health relief, noncommunicable diseases and antimicrobial resistance.

Experience also shows that health diplomacy at the national and regional level is critical for the implementation of health programmes through complex partnerships. For example polio eradication in the Region is dependent on successful negotiations with many players, whose trust has to be gained, in order to strengthen control programmes and create a safe and secure environment for vaccination campaigns.

Read more about health diplomacy

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Summary report on the fifth seminar on health diplomacy, Cairo, Egypt 7-8 May 2016

Summary report on the fourth seminar on health diplomacy Cairo, Egypt 2–4 May 2015

Policy brief: summary of the third seminar on health diplomacy, Dr Ala Alwan, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean

Summary report on the second regional seminar on health diplomacy Cairo, Egypt, 16–17 February 2013

Summary report on the first seminar on global health diplomacy, Cairo, Egypt, 6–7 May 2012

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