

Four districts in Iraq nominated to implement the Basic Package of Health Services for Iraq through Integrated District Health System based on Family Practice Approach



21 April 2011 –Beirut – Implementation of Basic Health Service Package (BHSP) through Improving the performance of District Health System based on Family Practice Approach (IDHS-FPA), is a new World Health Organization Eastern Mediterranean Region initiative adopted by the Ministry of Health in Iraq which will be introduced as a pilot in four districts in the country including Baghdad, Kirkuk, Missan and Erbil governorates. The initiatives aims at assuring universal, equitable and efficient access to essential health services for every individual especially the most vulnerable (children, women and elderly residing in the catchment area population of a Primary Health Care Facility.

Dr Hassan Hadi Baqer, Director General of Planning and Development in Ministry of Health said " District health system based on family practice approach is the tier where health care delivery comes into direct contact with community, the strong participatory planning and close and effective communication of all segments of the community at districts level plays a vital role in enhancing the performance of health system at both national and sub-national level. " and added "The implementation of IDHS-FPA in the selected four districts will provide us with golden opportunity to learn about the demographic and socioeconomic factors, specific challenges affecting the health of population in the targeted districts which will enable us to take timely and appropriate actions to mitigate the negative impact on health services delivery and thus health outcomes".

Dr Syed Jaffar Hussain, Representative of WHO Iraq office acknowledged the timely introduction of the IDHS based on FPA selection by the Ministry of and agreeing to conduct the assessment of the districts by both Ministries of Health in the central and Kurdistan Region and said "this reflects the strong political commitment of government towards this novel initiative in Iraq" Dr. Hussain added "the future of successful primary health care and well-being lies in family practice."

Dr Aqila Noori, Medical Officer for Health System Strengthening at the WHO office for Iraq highlighted that, "under the strong leadership of Ministry of health the implementation of BHSP through IDHS-FPA will be expanded in phases to include all the population living in the selected districts and building on first phase lesson learned, this initiative will be rolled it out to cover all governorates of Iraq."

The Ministry of Health of Iraq with cooperation of World Health Organization completed successfully a five days introductory workshop on implementation of Basic Health Service Package through Integrated District Health System based on Family Practice Approach which was held from 16- 21 April 2011 in Beirut . 41 high level government officials from all the 3 levels of government i.e. central MOH in Baghdad and MOH of Kurdistan Regional Government, governorate and the district level participated actively in the workshop. In addition the Representatives from USAID who is working for strengthening Primary Health Care in Iraq as well as representatives from UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees), participated in the workshop. The workshop was facilitated by WHO experts from Regional Office and country offices of Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. The purpose of this workshop was to agree on road map for the implementation of Basic Health Service Package through the IDHS-FPA in Iraq, identify the four districts following standard criteria, identify mechanisms for implementation, discuss and agree on the financial and human resources needs and agree on the contents of the eight assessment tools which will be used to undertake the baseline assessment in the selected districts.

WHO Representative has reaffirmed the organization's commitment to provide all possible technical assistance throughout the course of implementation of this intervention which will be carried out in phases in the selected governorates based on the priorities identified by the MOH during the assessment and planning phases.

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