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WHO provides technical guidance for national health policies and programmes in the occupied Palestinian territory – such as the Global School Health Survey.

Who we are

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the specialized body for health within the United Nations (UN) system. WHO produces health guidelines and standards, provides technical support to countries to address public health issues and monitors and assesses health trends.

WHO works with governments and partners to tackle global health problems and improve people's well-being. Over 8000 public health experts work for WHO in 147 country offices, six regional offices and at the headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

The WHO office in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) is the principal technical advisor to the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH) providing training and technical advice on a wide range of health issues. In the humanitarian field, WHO leads the Health and Nutrition Cluster for the coordination of assistance by international and local partners to the health sector in oPt.

WHO employs 45 staff at its offices in Jerusalem and Gaza City and is supported by the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMRO) in Cairo and WHO headquarters.

The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.

Preamble of the 1946 WHO constitution

What we do

The mission of the WHO office for the oPt is to promote the health of the Palestinian population, the development of the health system and ensure that emergency health needs are met. WHO works closely with the Palestinian MoH in carrying out this mission and is the technical adviser for the Health Sector Working Group (which coordinates aid for the health sector). WHO follows a strategic framework of assistance with the MoH (the Country Cooperation Strategy) to develop national capacity. Every two years, a more detailed programme of technical support, training and consultancy is agreed and implemented jointly with MoH covering areas such as emergency health preparedness, health system and human resource development, medical technology and pharmacy. In addition, WHO implements a number of development and humanitarian programmes in the health sector funded by different donors.

Main Development Programmes

East Jerusalem Hospitals

Donor: European Commission

The six East Jerusalem Hospitals (EJH) are the main providers of tertiary care in oPt. They serve as referral centres for Palestinians in need of specialized care from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. WHO is supporting the hospitals to achieve international accreditation. This requires the hospitals to comply with clinical and non-clinical standards and continuously improve the quality of care and safety for patients and staff. WHO is also supporting the development and activities of the EJH network,



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WHO supports the coordination of emergency preparedness.

which coordinates the work of the hospitals on issues of common concern, such as access.

HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis

Donor: Global Fund through UNDP

As a sub-recipient of the Global Fund programme on HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis (TB), WHO works with other UN agencies, MoH and the National AIDS Committee in order to keep prevalence of HIV/AIDS and TB low. WHO has contributed to research, the development of national strategies and the introduction of guidelines. In the field of TB, WHO supports development of national treatment guidelines and training modules. With HIV/AIDS, actions are focused on counselling and testing, anti-retroviral treatment, blood safety and surveillance.

Public Health Institute

Donor: Norway

WHO, with the support of the MoH and the Norwegian Government, is exploring the case for establishing a National Public Health Institute in oPt to strengthen core public health functions such as evaluation and analysis of

health status, public health surveillance, quality assurance and public health research. The National Institute would be an independent body providing reliable health information and advice to the MoH, other decision makers and the general public.

Non-Communicable Diseases

With a rise in life expectancy and a change in life style, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are on the rise in oPt as in other countries. Around 50% of deaths are attributable to cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases. WHO is supporting the MoH in fundamentally changing the approach to NCDs from purely curative care to prevention and control. Modifiable risk factors – tobacco and harmful alcohol consumption, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity – are the main causes of the four major NCDs.

Mental Health

Donor: European Commission

WHO has supported the development of community-based mental health services in oPt since 2003, when the strategic operational plan for mental health services was developed jointly with the MoH and WHO HQ. Over the past three

years, WHO has assisted the MoH in establishing mental health units to lead reforms in the integration of mental health into primary health care and has supported the introduction of postgraduate mental health programmes in Palestinian universities. WHO has also supported the establishment of family and user associations, a rehabilitation programme in Bethlehem Mental Hospital and has conducted public education campaigns.

Main Humanitarian Programmes

Health & Nutrition Cluster Coordination

Donor: Spain, Norway

WHO leads the oPt Health and Nutrition Cluster: the joint coordination forum for 55 UN agencies and international/local NGOs providing humanitarian health and nutrition services in oPt. The cluster is co-chaired by the Palestinian MoH to ensure alignment with national structures. The cluster conducts common needs assessments in order to fill gaps and prevent duplications in aid delivery. It is also the forum for emergency preparedness, both for armed conflict and natural disasters. In addition, WHO represents the health sector in intra-sectoral and donor coordination meetings, plays a key role in facilitating the work of health partners in Gaza, and liaises with the MoH in Ramallah, the de facto authorities in Gaza and the Israeli authorities on humanitarian health issues.

Medical Equipment and Drugs for Gaza

Donor: Islamic Development Bank

In the Gaza Strip, WHO provides support to fill gaps in the supply of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, and helps in handling the large volume of medical supplies donated to the Gaza Strip. This entails provi-



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WHO supports the Palestinian Ministry of Health in providing drugs to Gaza.

ding urgently needed drugs, medical equipment and spare parts required for maintaining medical equipment and electricity generators for hospitals. In addition, WHO is involved in logistics and supply management helping to sort, register, store and deliver medical supplies.

Maternal and Child Health

Donor: Australia

WHO is working with maternity and neonatal units in the seven main public hospitals in Gaza to improve the quality and safety of care before, during and after childbirth. The project covers

about 90% of births in the Gaza Strip. The goal is to raise standards of clinical care and reduce risks from over-medicalised management of normal labour, high-risk pregnancies, postnatal complications and the premature discharge of mother and babies after birth. Another objective is to improve infection control and provide more dignified and sensitive care for women in childbirth. Key improvements in childbirth care routines and delivery settings have already been introduced.

Advocacy

Donor: Swiss Development Cooperation

The WHO advocacy programme focuses on Palestinians' right to health, in particular access to health. Through research, monitoring and reporting, WHO highlights the impact on health care of the Israeli occupation and the on-going conflict in oPt. To improve the fulfilment of the right to health, it uses public advocacy and quiet diplomacy with stakeholders. The programme strives to increase knowledge of health and human rights within MoH and the academic community in oPt by organising seminars and trainings.



WHO collects and disseminates information on the health status of Palestinians.

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