

1. Reports on the work of the World Health Organization in the Eastern Mediterranean Region – Annual Report of the Regional Director 2010 (Agenda item 2 (a), document EM/RC58/2)

The Annual Report of the Regional Director covers the calendar year 2010 and comprises three chapters in line with the core areas outlined in the amended Medium-term Strategic Plan 2008–2013. It describes issues and challenges, actions taken, results achieved and future directions for all the 13 strategic objectives set for WHO's collaboration with Member States. It illustrates the effectiveness of WHO's contribution to the improvement of health in countries of the Region, highlighting progress and constraints. Specific examples of the impact of WHO's technical cooperation are also given.

Under this agenda item, progress reports on the following subjects will be included as information documents:

- (b) Eradication of poliomyelitis (EM/RC58/INF.DOC.1)
- (c) Tobacco-Free Initiative (EM/RC58/INF.DOC.2)
- (d) Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (EM/RC58/INF.DOC.3)
- (e) Control and elimination of malaria (EM/RC58/INF.DOC.4)
- (f) Cancer prevention and control (EM/RC58/INF.DOC.5)
- (g) Regional emergency solidarity fund and progress made in operationalizing the regional hub for logistics and supply management (EM/RC58/INF.DOC.6)
- (h) Pandemic H1N1 and progress on the response (EM/RC58/INF.DOC.7)
- (i) The regional situation regarding road traffic injuries (EM/RC58/INF.DOC.8)

2. Managing the use of public health pesticides in the face of the increasing burden of vector-borne diseases (Agenda item 3, document EM/RC58/Tech. Disc.1)

The Eastern Mediterranean Region is facing an increasing burden of vector-borne diseases. Progress in controlling these disease is compromised by the limited number of vector control interventions, most of which rely on the use of pesticides. The lack of new pesticides under development and the spread of vector resistance necessitate judicious use of existing pesticides to preserve their public health value. A set of actions are recommended to guide national policy and to strengthen national capacity for the sound management and judicious use of public health pesticides.

3. Dengue: call for urgent interventions for a rapidly expanding emerging disease (Agenda item 4(a), document EM/RC58/3)

Over the past three decades, dengue fever/dengue hemorrhagic fever has been rapidly expanding in the Eastern Mediterranean Region with outbreaks documented in countries along the coastal lines of the Red Sea and Arabian Sea and in Pakistan. The paper describes the current situation in the Region and proposes specific areas for strengthening of core capacities in the short, medium and long term to reduce the threat of this emerging disease which threatens national, regional and global health security. The means of prevention and control are well identified and require partnership between different sectors. The paper also discusses the challenges in establishing a quality and functional epidemiological and laboratory-based surveillance system.

4. Scaling up the Expanded Programme on Immunization to meet global and regional targets (Agenda item 4(b), document EM/RC58/4)

Immunization is one of the most effective, cost-effective and safe public health interventions and one of the main tools for achieving Millennium Development Goal 4 on reducing under-five mortality. More than 20% of child deaths are attributed to diseases for which effective vaccines are currently available. The past few years have witnessed remarkable improvement in routine vaccination coverage in several countries. Measles mortality in the Region was reduced by 93% during the period 2000-2008 and several new vaccines were introduced. However, around 1.9 million infants did not receive their third dose of DTP (DTP3) in 2009. The target of measles elimination by 2010 was not achieved and the gains of measles mortality reduction are at risk unless measles control efforts are sustained. New vaccines introduction constitutes the major challenge. Hib vaccine is not offered to 34% of the annual birth cohort and only 7% and 4% of infants are born in countries that offer pneumococcal and rotavirus vaccines, respectively. The paper draws attention to the challenges facing immunization programmes and to the urgent need for scaling up the national immunization programmes in order to sustain gains and achieve the targets of disease control, eradication and elimination.

5. Strategy for mental health and substance abuse in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (Agenda item 4(c), document EM/RC58/5)

Mental health and its problems are a public health issue inextricably linked to quality of life, productivity and social capital. Mental, neurological and substance use disorders affect all social groups and ages, contributing to 14% and 12% of the burden of disease globally and regionally, respectively. Resolution WHA55.10 called on Member States to provide support to WHO's global action programme for mental health. The mhGAP programme calls for enhancement of political commitment and development of policy and legislative infrastructure. The Regional Committee in 2010 requested development of a comprehensive mental health strategy to guide the response of Member States, to promote mental health and to provide for integrated efforts for prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of persons with mental, neurological and substance use disorders. The regional strategy and actions proposed provide a foundation for the development of national strategies and action plans.

6. Strategic directions for research for health: scaling up in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (Agenda item 4(d), document EM/RC58/6)

The health scene in the Region is changing, demanding new approaches and institutional realignment to address the emerging issues. Research for health is a vital component in developing health systems, in understanding the causes of poor health and predicting and mitigating the effects of other factors on health. Aligned with the global movement towards research for health initiated in the WHO strategy on research for health, endorsed by the World Health Assembly in 2010, the strategic directions for research for health are based on the premise that research is not a luxury that is affordable only in times of plenty but is a continuing necessity. They aim to guide WHO and its partners in the Region to work together in organizing research and synchronizing its objectives in order to enhance and promote the culture of research and provide evidence for health policy, planning and decision-making. The five goals of the strategic directions for research for health proposed are interrelated with the goal of strengthening health research systems and improving health, equity and development.

7. Report of the Regional Consultative Committee (thirty-fifth meeting) (Agenda item 6(a), document EM/RC58/7)

The Regional Consultative Committee held its thirty-fifth meeting in the Regional Office from 20 to 21 April 2011. The main topics on the agenda were: dengue fever, immunization, and regional strategies for research for health, human resources for health and mental health and substance abuse. These technical subjects are also included on the agenda of the Regional Committee, and will be discussed in detail under specific agenda items. The report of the thirty-fifth meeting of the Regional Consultative Committee will be submitted to the Regional Committee for review and endorsement.

8. Report of the 25th meeting of the Eastern Mediterranean Advisory Committee on Health Research (Agenda item 6(b), document EM/RC58/8)

The 25th Session of the Eastern Mediterranean Advisory Committee for Health Research (EM-ACHR) was held in Cairo, Egypt, from 18 to 19 October, 2010, under the theme “Research is everyone’s business”. The topics discussed included the status of research for health in the Regional Office, research-related activities supported in the Member States and accountability in research for health. The main recommendations of the meeting included: developing an “action-based” research for health strategy, building on previous regional strategies and aligned with the global strategy endorsed by the World Health Assembly in 2010; promotion of dissemination and translation of research results to guide health policy and planning through activation of regional networks; adaptation of the WHO guidelines for ethics to ensure that research involving human subjects in the Region conforms with global ethical standards; and review and promotion of the role of WHO collaborating centres in the Region.

9. Resolutions and decisions of regional interest adopted by the Sixty-fourth World Health Assembly (Agenda item 7(a), document EM/RC58/9)

The paper highlights resolutions and decisions on global developments adopted by the World Health Assembly in 2011 that have direct relevance to or implication for the Region, and a direct link with many of the priority activities of the Region. In addition, it provides a summary of the steps and actions being taken in implementing specific resolutions relating to regional and country needs.

10. Review of the draft provisional agenda of EB130 (Agenda item 7(b), document EM/RC58/10-Annex I)

The Regional Committee will review and discuss the draft provisional agenda of EB130 (January 2012), providing comments, if any.

11. WHO reform for a healthy future (Agenda item 7(c), HQ document)

12. Nomination of a Member State to the Board of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and its committees (Agenda item 8, document EM/RC58/10)

In accordance with the governance rules of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the current term of all representatives from the Eastern Mediterranean Region on the Board and its committees will come to an end by December 2011. At present, Yemen is the board member and Palestine is the alternate, Tunisia is serving on the Policy and Strategy Committee (PSC) and Iraq is on the Finance and Audit Committee (FAC). The Regional Committee is requested to nominate four Member States to serve on the Board as full member and alternate member and on the PSC and FAC, respectively, for a two-year period from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2013.

13. Nomination of a Member State to the Policy and Coordination Committee of the Special Programme of Research, Development, and Research Training in Human Reproduction (Agenda item 9, document EM/RC58/11)

According to the rules of membership of the Special Programme Policy and Coordinating Committee, as of 1 January 2012, there will be one vacancy for a Member State from the Eastern Mediterranean Region to replace Iraq, whose term of office will come to an end on 31 December 2011. The Regional Committee is requested to nominate one Member State to serve on the Committee, for a three-year period from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2014.

14. Award of the Dr A.T. Shousha Foundation Prize for 2011 (Agenda item 10(a), document, EM/RC58/INF.DOC.9)

The Executive Board, at its 128th Session approved the nomination of Professor Dr Amjad Daoud Niazi (Iraq) for the Dr A.T. Shousha Foundation Prize for 2011. The prize will therefore be awarded to Professor Niazi during the opening of the Fifty-eighth Session of the Regional Committee.

15. Award of the State of Kuwait Prize for the Control of Cancer, Cardiovascular Diseases and Diabetes in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (Agenda item 10(b), document,

EM/RC58/INF.DOC.10)

Following Decision No.3 of the Fifty-seventh Session of the Regional Committee, the State of Kuwait Prize for the Control of Cancer, Cardiovascular Diseases and Diabetes in the Eastern Mediterranean, which this year was solicited in the area of cancer, will be awarded to Dr Alireza Ansary-Moghaddam (Islamic Republic of Iran), during the opening of the Fifty-eighth Session of the Regional Committee.

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