

13 June 2023 – A regional expert consultation was held on 6–8 June 2023 in Amman, Jordan, to harmonize the national ambient air quality standards in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, in line with WHO air quality guidelines.

The consultation was organized by the Climate Change, Health and Environment/Healthier Populations Department of the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and was attended by 40 air quality and health experts (32 in person and 8 virtual) from the ministries of health and environment, research centres, and universities of Bahrain, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the occupied Palestinian territory, Oman, Pakistan, Somalia, Spain, United Kingdom, and United States of America.

The consultation was inaugurated by Dr Maha El Adawy, Director of the Healthier Populations Department, and Mr Mazen Malkawi, Regional Advisor, Climate Change, Health, and Environment Unit. It was co-facilitated by experts of the Imperial College London, Spanish Research Council (CSIC), WHO-Headquarters, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), United Nations Environment Programme/West Asia (UNEP/ROWA), and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

WHO recently updated its air quality guidelines (AQG) to serve as a global target for national, regional and city governments to work towards improving their citizen's health by reducing air pollution. The main objectives of this consultation were to identify the best methodology for adopting WHO air quality guidelines at the national levels; provide strategic actions for linking national standards to air quality management processes for public health protection; provide guidance on how to improve the understanding of the health impact of air pollution in dusty environments; and update the regional plan of action on air quality and health.

During the meeting, we celebrated the fifth World Food Safety Day on 7 June 2023 to draw attention and inspire action to help prevent, detect, and manage foodborne risks. More than 600 million people fall ill, and 420 000 die every year from eating contaminated food. This year's theme, "Food standards save lives," emphasizes the critical role of established food safety practices and standards in guaranteeing the safety and quality of our food.

## **Related link**

[WHO air quality guidelines](#)

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