The news of the sudden death of Dr Mahmoud Fikri on 17 October 2017 was met by shock and sadness by all who knew and worked with him, and the loss to the Organization is keenly felt.

Dr Fikri had been nominated Regional Director during the 63rd session of the Regional Committee of the Eastern Mediterranean in October 2016, and then appointed by the Executive Board in January 2017. He took office on 1 February 2017. Over the almost nine months that Dr Fikri served as Regional Director, his commitment and dedication to furthering the mission of WHO made him a colleague remembered by all. His determination to position WHO as a leading and respected health partner, his modesty, sense of humor, kindheartedness, and compassion were all remarked upon by the Organization.

Previously, Dr Fikri had served as Advisor to the Minister of Health of the United Arab Emirates from 1996 to 2017, and had been a prominent figure in the field of public health in the Region for many years. He was previously the Assistant-Undersecretary for Preventive Medicine and Health Policies Affairs in the Ministry (1995–2013). He served as a Member of the Board of Directors of the WHO Centre for Health Development (the “WHO Kobe Centre”), Japan, and as a Member of the Advisory Board of the Health Ministers’ Council for Gulf Cooperation Council States (1996–2005). He was also a member of WHO’s Executive Board from 1997 to 2000.
Dr Fikri is survived by his wife, five sons and two daughters.