

The WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean organized a regional meeting on the strategic framework for health workforce development in the Region from 1 to 2 June 2016 in Cairo, Egypt. The objectives of the meeting were:

- to share evidence and discuss countries' experiences in addressing health workforce challenges and actions taken to progress toward universal health coverage;
- to review and build consensus toward finalizing the draft regional health workforce strategic framework, in anticipation of its presentation at the Sixty-third session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean;
- to discuss the way forward towards implementation of the strategic framework.

The message of Dr Ala Alwan, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, highlighted the importance of finding solutions to key health workforce challenges faced by the Region. To respond to the challenges and priority issues in the Region, he said that a draft strategic framework for health workforce development 2016–2030 had been developed through a series of consultations that had taken place in the Region since 2014. He pointed out that it was timely as we embarked on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the World Health Assembly had just adopted a global strategy on human resources for health.

Dr Alwan referred to the ongoing work of the United Nations High-Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth and underlined that Member States were in great need of further investments in health workforce development. WHO-EM/HRH/638/E Page 2 Universal health coverage – defined as all people being able to use needed health services with sufficient quality to be effective without financial hardship – is a shared vision of health system development for Member States in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and a major element of the post-2015 development agenda.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 3, highlights the need for substantial increase in the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries. Well planned and concerted efforts are required to ensure availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality of health workforce. In response to this, the Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly also asked WHO to develop the Global strategy on human resources for health: workforce 2030, which was adopted by the Health Assembly in May 2016.

Member States in the Eastern Mediterranean Region are facing an overall shortage of health workers but the Region is diverse with diverse challenges. Member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Group 1) are heavily reliant on expatriate health workers, while Group 2 countries, which constitute middle-income countries with relatively well established health delivery infrastructure, face geographical and skill imbalances with increasing quality concerns. Group 3 countries face critical shortages of health workforce. Overall production and availability of health workers is suboptimal, further compounded by their imbalanced geographical distribution, inappropriate skill mix, quality concerns and high health workforce mobility.

Related report

[Summary report on the Meeting on the strategic framework for health workforce development in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, Cairo, Egypt, 1–2 June 2016](#)

Tuesday 23rd of April 2024 09:03:13 AM