

The WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region has identified health systems strengthening as one of the five strategic priorities for its work with Member States over the next five years. A paper (EM/RC59/Tech.Disc.1) presented before the Fifty-ninth session of the Regional Committee in 2012, identified health system constraints and challenges, and delineated the way forward in strengthening health systems in the Region, including options for health workforce development.

The WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean recognizes the importance of supporting Member States in their efforts to scale up nursing and midwifery capacity, creating positive practice environments, developing strong committed leadership and advocating for new specialized roles. In 2008, a Regional Committee resolution (EM/RC55/R.5) on promoting nursing and midwifery in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, called for rapid scale up of the nursing and midwifery workforce to address disparities in supply and demand, and the development of a strategy for staff retention, including promotion of the role and status of nurses and development of clear career paths.

As a part of ongoing work on nursing and midwifery development, the eighth meeting of the Regional Advisory Panel on Nursing, convened in 2011 in Muscat, Oman, updated the regional strategy for nursing and midwifery development and identified access and quality of education as one of the strategic directions in order to meet national priority health needs in adequate numbers, and to continue to maintain nurses' competence throughout their work life.

The current regional standards and prototype curricula for nursing education have been extensively used during the past decade and have been the basis for establishing basic and post-basic specialty programmes. Given the time frame that has lapsed since they were first developed, it is imperative to review and update programmes and prepare for the accreditation process in the countries of the Region.

The updated standards need to take into account the WHO global standards for nursing education and recent trends in transformative education. The updated prototype curricula also need to integrate recent concepts and approaches in more detail in order to prepare nurses for their future roles in health. These concepts include emergency and disaster preparedness competencies and a greater emphasis on noncommunicable diseases, patient safety, the social determinants of health, primary health care, community mental health, information technology, infection prevention and control (including injection safety), disability, violence and injury prevention, and ageing.

Against this backdrop, the Regional Office convened a consultation on nursing education to review and update regional standards for nursing education and the prototype curricula for technical and professional nursing education, which took place from 29 September to 1 October 2013 in Amman, Jordan. The consultation, in accordance with Regional Committee resolutions EM/RC55/R.5 and EM/RC59/R.3 and the updated regional strategy for nursing and midwifery 2012–2020, sought to contribute towards the development of a balanced, motivated, well-distributed and well-managed health workforce with the appropriate skills mix in the Region.

Participants included selected deans of nursing, experts in nursing and midwifery education, selected members of the Regional Advisory Panel on Nursing, the Chairperson of the Global Advisory Group on Nursing and Midwifery, representatives of the WHO collaborating centres for nursing in the Region, a representative of the Scientific Society of Arab Faculties of Nursing, as well as WHO staff from headquarters and regional (African and Eastern Mediterranean) levels.

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- review and update the present regional standards for nursing education (pre- and postservice) in line with resolution EM/RC.55/R.5 on promoting nursing and midwifery development in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and resolution EM/RC59/R.3 on health systems strengthening in countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region;
- review and finalize the draft prototype curricula for technical nursing education (diploma level) and professional education (university level);
- develop a framework for nursing specialization including advanced nursing practice in the Region;
- develop an action plan to adopt the updated curricula and the specialization framework in Member States.

### **Related report**

[Report on the Ninth meeting of the Regional Advisory Panel on Nursing and consultation on nursing education in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, Amman, Jordan, 29 September–1 October 2013](#)

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