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Baghdad, Iraq, 4 May 2023 – The World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health of Iraq, concluded this week a 3-day workshop on the self-evaluation phase of the second round of joint external evaluation (JEE) of the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005).

The workshop brought together 88 participants representing various sectors, including the Ministry of Health, food safety, animal health, environmental health, points of entry and security sectors, with the aim of assessing the country's capacities to prevent, detect and rapidly respond to public health hazards, whether occurring naturally or due to deliberate or accidental

events.

“This round of joint external evaluation is critical to enhance multisectoral collaboration for health security in Iraq, support the country in completing the self-evaluation phase of the JEE and prepare for the external evaluation phase,” said WHO Representative Dr Ahmed Zouiten. “The JEE will assist Iraq in determining the most pressing gaps in the country’s human and animal health systems, allowing them to prioritize opportunities for improved preparedness and rapid response to public health risks,” he added.

The JEE comprises 2 stages: the self-evaluation phase by IHR national stakeholders using the JEE tool and the external evaluation phase by external experts (WHO and partners) jointly with nationals. The outcomes of the evaluation are paramount in informing the updates to the National Action Planning for Health Security.

The first JEE, held in March 2019, assessed Iraq’s capacity for health security and provided a baseline for progress in IHR core capacities. The evaluation covered 19 technical areas across prevention, detection, response, points of entry, and hazards, and provided a basis for strengthening health security in Iraq.

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