

Working together towards achieving Health For All By All



16 December 2021, Cairo – Motivated by their shared goal to achieve stronger collaboration and better health for all, international development, health and humanitarian agencies in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East and North Africa Region convened today for the second annual meeting of the Regional Health Alliance (RHA), marking its first anniversary.

Seeking to build on early successes, partner members of the RHA launched an ambitious joint action plan for 2022–2023 to step up work on improving access to quality health services for all, enhancing community engagement, improving financial protection, protecting healthy environments, promoting new medical products and augmenting health information systems.

Initiated and led by the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, as part of the implementation of WHO’s vision for the Region to achieve “Health for All by All”, the RHA brings together 15 agencies working on the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to improve health throughout the Region. Half of all people in the Region live in countries facing long-term conflicts, environmental threats and natural disasters alongside the COVID-19 pandemic, and the RHA enables different agencies to confront these shared challenges, pool knowledge and resources, and coordinate their efforts for maximum positive impact on the most vulnerable groups, including women and girls. The meeting marked the RHA’s first anniversary. Participants reviewed progress so far and discussed examples of successful collaboration, including capacity-building activities as well as community empowerment and vaccine roll-out in the context of COVID 19 response. The RHA focuses on accelerating progress towards a wide range of health-related SDGs, and forms part of the [Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All](#)

The new plan will channel action through seven closely linked accelerators: primary health care; sustainable financing for health; community and civil society engagement; determinants of health; innovative programming in fragile and vulnerable settings; research and development, innovation and access; and data and digital health. Additionally, a Gender Advisory Group will ensure mainstreaming gender equality across all areas of work. All seven streams of action will also be addressing the many implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and the systemic gaps that the pandemic has exposed and exacerbated in countries across the region.

The plan adds several new objectives to the RHA's agenda. Countries of the Region will be assisted to tackle the underlying social determinants of health, agencies will collaborate to scale up key health technologies, and there will be a strong focus on addressing health and development and peace as a coherent nexus in emergency countries. The work will reinforce the efforts of UN country teams, guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

Adopted by world leaders in 2015, the Sustainable Development Agenda includes 17 SDGs and 169 related targets covering areas such as gender equality, safe drinking water and sanitation, education, environment, human rights and housing, all of which have a direct or indirect impact on health. Achieving the health-related SDGs therefore requires collaboration among many agencies and stakeholders.

The RHA is already attracting new members. In December 2021, its 12 founding agencies were joined by three more – the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) – and discussions with other agencies are underway to further broaden and strengthen the Alliance.

Note to editors

The Regional Health Alliance is hosted by WHO and comprises regional offices of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), The World Bank, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

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