

29 April 2015 – Under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Muna Al-Hussein, WHO Patron for Nursing and Midwifery in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, WHO organized a regional nursing forum on the future of nursing and midwifery in the Eastern Mediterranean Region on 24 April, in Amman, Jordan.

In his opening address, Dr Ala Alwan, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, stressed the importance of nurses and midwives for health development and the five regional health priorities. He observed that the Forum provided an excellent platform to learn about good practices from around the world that could be implemented in the Region.

Princess Muna Al-Hussein noted in her inaugural address that nursing, as part of multidisciplinary health care teams, including family members as carers, was key to achieving universal health coverage in the Region. The Princess said that strengthening nursing and midwifery in the Region needed to be undertaken in collaboration with government chief nursing and midwifery officers, educational institutions, WHO Collaborating Centres for nursing, regulatory councils and professional associations. She told participants that they needed to work together to bring to policy-makers the evidence on best practices, and urged participants to view the work that they have begun as both a challenge and an opportunity to make a real difference at all levels of the health care system.

The Forum benefited from the participation of nursing and midwifery leaders from other regions and international organizations. Participants identified the key challenges facing nursing and midwifery in the Region in the areas of education, the workforce, practice and services, regulation and governance, and information systems and evidence. They deliberated on the implementation of high impact actions within the context of health system strengthening that are feasible, relevant, focused and cost-effective. The results of the Eastern Mediterranean Nursing and Midwifery Study, an online survey, were also discussed.

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