



Cairo, Egypt, 1 August 2019 — I have just returned from my third, and most fruitful and memorable visit to Pakistan as WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean. The 4 days I spent in the country this week were truly effective and productive.

I had the chance to visit different areas in the country, including Larkana, where the current HIV outbreak has further aggravated already burdened health facilities in the impoverished area.

I held in-depth discussions with health officials, politicians, medical personnel, donors, partners and academics to learn more about health needs, foster partnerships and jointly advocate for more resources. I saw strong political commitment to fighting diseases and placing high priority on health issues.

In my meeting with WHO staff in the main office and sub-offices, I saw how committed they are to saving lives, and I was very proud of their achievements and collective efforts to serve the people in Pakistan.

In Larkana, I visited Sheikh Zayed Hospital and Children's Hospital, which have admitted hundreds of children diagnosed with HIV and in need of urgent medical care, overwhelming the capacities of these facilities.

At the Children's Hospital, I met 8-month-old Mansoor who is suffering from malnutrition. His

helpless mother was too feeble to look after the child, who was clearly in pain. It was apparent that people in this area, like Mansoor's mother, suffer from severe financial hardship which makes it difficult for them hospitalize their children in time.

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