

H.E Dr Bervis Davoodi, Vice President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, called for stronger and more enduring cooperation among Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region to ensure greater equity in delivery of healthcare. Inaugurating the 53rd Session of the Regional Committee today in Isfahan, the Vice President urged delegates to introduce innovative scientific methods so that healthcare is available and within reach of the most vulnerable. In this regard, he stressed the importance of the spiritual dimension that calls upon all humans to make the best use of science and break the scientific taboos.

The Vice President underlined the need for developing countries to be supported in evolving new technology and methods bridging the gaps between the rich and the poor and between developed and developing countries.

Recognizing that countries in the Region are threatened both by emerging infectious diseases like avian influenza, and by long-standing diseases like HIV AIDS, malaria, and TB the Vice President emphasized the importance of developing a well-trained and dedicated public health workforce. He said this would promote efficiency of the health systems to prevent, control and eliminate the chronic diseases in the Region.

H.E. Dr Davoodi expressed his country's readiness for full cooperation and exchange of experiences and ideas with WHO and other Member States.

In his address, Dr Hussein Gezairy, Regional Director for WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region remembered the late Dr .J W.Lee, WHO Director-General who passed away last May, saying that Dr Lee had led the world's efforts in fighting HIV/AIDS through his 3x5 initiative and worked hard on the decentralization of WHO's work, from Head Quarters to Regions to countries

He denounced the violation of international laws through the aggression against civilians in Lebanon and use of cluster bombs against them. He emphasized the importance of investing in emergency preparedness giving the impact in the Region in countries such as Iraq, Somalia , Sudan, Afghanistan and Pakistan..

The Regional Director stressed the importance of the spread of avian influenza throughout the world and referenced it as the most daunting health challenge today. He applauded the 10 countries of the Region hit by the avian influenza for being transparent in tackling the situation. “WHO has alerted the world about the avian influenza pandemic. It is time for more efforts to contain the pandemic and it is important to have clear cut plans to face the threat” Dr Gezairy said.

The Regional Director emphasized the progress achieved towards declaring EMR a polio free. He hailed Egypt for freeing itself from the deeply-rooted virus and expressed hope that both Pakistan and Afghanistan, the two countries where the poliovirus is still endemic, would be soon declared polio-free.

He urged Member States to focus on vaccination safety, saying that the Region has to gain self sufficiency of vaccine production, especially with some countries such as Egypt and the Islamic Republic of Iran having the potentials for producing vaccines.

Dr Gezairy emphasized the importance of addressing the health impacts of social issues such as poverty reduction. He underlined the importance of strengthening public health infrastructure by producing a balanced health workforce, giving attention to health promotion and focusing on disease prevention and control.

In his brief speech, Dr Andres Nordstrom, Acting Director General referred to the untimely death of the late Dr J.W. Lee and pledged to continue the mission of the late Director General He emphasized the clear relevance and importance of WHO’s role and core functions whether providing technical support, assessing health trends, setting norms and standards, articulating policy options or providing leadership He highlighted the importance of engagement with partners.

In his welcome address, H.E. Dr Kamran Lankarani, Minister of Health and Medical

Education of the host country, the Islamic Republic of Iran, said that without paying attention to the social effects of poverty and unemployment and without considering social justice,

development cannot take place. He acknowledged the important contribution by WHO in supporting the key national health programmes. saying that the Regional Committee is an opportunity to achieve unanimity and cooperation among Member States and to pay a critical look to what we have done and find solutions to emerging problems

The opening session of the 53rd session of the Regional Committee, saw the launch of the Arabic version of the WHO report on Chronic Disease, followed by the signing ceremony of a joint statement by the 22 Health Ministers and heads of delegations.

The participants will also discuss several important health issues including the revised strategy for malaria control in the Region. They will be updated on the global fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Pandemic influenza preparedness and response and recovery activities in countries affected by emergencies. An important discussion will be around a regional strategy for knowledge management to support public health.

Thursday 18th of April 2024 07:36:55 AM