The aim of the IHR is to help the international community prevent and respond to acute public health risks that have the potential to cross borders and threaten people worldwide31 October 2018 – Over 60 representatives from various public and private institutions in Qatar worked closely with a technical team from the WHO Regional Office for Eastern Mediterranean in country health emergency preparedness and the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005) to accelerate efforts to finalize the national action plan for health security in Doha between 21 and 24 October 2018.

The 4-day workshop represented an excellent opportunity to conduct a multisectoral review of Qatar's progress following the joint external evaluation (JEE) completed in mid-2016.

Working in groups based on their related areas of expertise, participants discussed all 19 technical areas to develop or build on the current achievements through insightful discussion and exchanging information to complete the plan and determine costing of activities.

"Our Ministry has been very pleased to host the WHO team who have been able to work with their counterparts in Doha to take concrete steps to ensure Qatar's compliance with the requirements of the IHR. The workshop provided us with an opportunity to assess where we are

and to develop a roadmap for upcoming activities. It also demonstrated Qatar's ongoing commitment to contribute to global health security," explained Dr Salih Ali Al Marri, Assistant to the Minister of Public Health of Qatar.

Qatar was one of the first countries to conduct a JEE, a voluntary evaluation that identifies strengths, best practices and gaps in a country's health sector.

"Based on this thorough evaluation in 2016, Qatar has taken further steps in the implementation of the IHR. The country has demonstrated strong commitment to global health security and to building the core capacities required by the IHR," said Dr Osman El Mahal, Technical Officer, WHO technical team lead.

After 4 full days of discussion, the first draft of the national action plan was prepared and shared with stakeholders for revision and consolidation. Once agreed among all partners, the costing of the plan will be completed by the WHO team. Upon endorsement by national authorities, Qatar will be one of the first countries to operationalize its national action plan for health security.

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