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Dr Abdel Aziz Saleh

Dr Abdel Aziz Saleh, who died on 11 January 2015, was an important figure in public health in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and beyond. Dr Saleh made a positive impact wherever he went and his influence will be felt by future generations. Born in Alexandria, Egypt in 1942, he received a Bachelor's degree in pharmacy from the University of Alexandria. Having completed his doctorate in 1968, he joined the Faculty of Pharmacy, becoming professor of pharmacology in 1981.

Dr Saleh joined the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean in 1989 as regional adviser in the area of medicines. He was known for his interest in different aspects of public health and the role of economic, health and legislative policies in making medicines accessible to all people in all countries at affordable cost. In 1995, Dr Saleh was appointed director of health policy and management in the Regional Office. He was relentless in his efforts to make the best possible use of the policies adopted by the World Trade Organization and contributed to developing the document "Health for all in the 21st century".

During his tenure as Deputy Regional Director, 2001–2007, Dr Saleh dedicated himself to addressing the public health emergencies that threatened countries of the Region. This was in addition to his involvement in the regular regional areas of work of that time. He was also an active member of the editorial board of the Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal, from its launch in 1995 until 2012.

Dr Saleh was committed to the principles of WHO and advancing the health of the peoples of the Region. His compassion for all was apparent, and with those who worked with him he was warm-hearted and patient, making them feel they were members of his family.

We offer our deepest sympathy to his family.

Dr Awni Arif

Dr Awni Arif had a long and interesting career at WHO, serving the Organization at both the

headquarters and regional levels. Dr Arif was born in Iraq in 1925. He obtained his Doctor of Medicine degree from Baghdad University Medical School, and then won a scholarship to the United States for postgraduate studies. He obtained a Master's degree and then a doctoral degree in the field of public health and preventive medicine from the School of Public Health, Columbia University. He went on to teach at the Columbia University School of Public Health while doing research work on drug abuse in New York. He believed that drug addiction should be treated as a medical problem and not as a criminal offence.

He joined WHO in February 1960. After six years, he returned to Iraq where he was appointed Director-General of Health Services at the Ministry of Health. After three years in Iraq, he again joined WHO as WHO representative in Libya and then WHO representative in Pakistan. In 1976, he was reassigned as a Senior Medical Officer in charge of the Drug Dependence Programme in WHO headquarters, a post he held until his retirement in 1986. He contributed considerably to the evolution of ideas in the field of addiction.

Dr Arif was a very fine man and an exemplary WHO senior staff member. He was highly respected by colleagues, Member States and partners, and was always ready to help a colleague and a friend.

He died on 22 January 2015, months short of his 90th birthday. He will be sadly missed by his friends and colleagues and will be remembered with affection and admiration by all who knew him. We offer our deepest sympathies to his family.

Dr Mohammad Abdur Rab

Dr Mohammad Abdur Rab died on 8 August, 2015 in Toronto, Canada after a long and prominent career in public health. He was born in 1949 in Mianwali, Pakistan and graduated in 1973 from Nishter Medical College, Multan, Pakistan with an MBBS degree. He went on to receive a Master's in Public Health & Tropical Medicine in 1984 from Tulane University, United States of America, and later a PhD in epidemiology in 1993 from the London School of Tropical Medicine & Hygiene, United Kingdom.

His professional career was diverse. He served as part of Pakistan army's commando force in Baluchistan, was a professor at the Health Services Academy in Islamabad, and in 1999 was appointed Technical Adviser, Health Net International, Peshawar. During his research in northern areas of Pakistan he was once kidnapped and held hostage by militants for months where he saw death at close quarters. This experience left him with a more humble and deeper

perspective on life. Dr Abdur Rab was influential in the eradication of Guinea worm disease in Pakistan through the National Guinea Worm Eradication Programme and this contribution was personally acknowledged by President Jimmy Carter.

In 2001 Dr Abdur Rab moved to Cairo, Egypt when he joined WHO/EMRO as Regional Adviser, Research Policy & Cooperation and in 2007 he was appointed WR Sudan in Khartoum. He returned to the Regional Office in 2010 as Regional Adviser, Research Policy & Cooperation, from where he retired in 2011.

Dr Abdur Rab's wide public health knowledge was coupled with a great compassion for the welfare of the people and commitment to improving health. We extend our sincere condolences to his family.

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