MINISTRY OF HEALTH
FEDERAL GOVERN

1 July 2022 | Cairo - At the request of the Federal Ministry of Health of Somalia, WHO conducted a joint fact-finding mission from 26 June to 1 July 2022 to identify opportunities and strategies to develop national capacity for use of evidence for policy-making and strengthening the health information system for a stronger health system in the country.

The mission, led by Dr Arash Rashidian, Director of the Department of Science, Information and Dissemination, included detailed consultations with key policy-makers and relevant staff at the Federal Ministry of Health, key researchers and members of academic and research institutions, as well as other key relevant national and international organizations in the country. Joint discussions were also held with staff from the WHO country office, National Institute of Health, National Bureau of Statistics, Civil Registration Unit and other development partners.

The mission noted, among other things, several key challenges related to health information system (HIS) such as fragmentation of data systems between donor-driven systems and between disease-specific programmes, and the capacity to collect, process, analyse and use data for decision-making.

Despite these challenges, the mission noted the commitment of the Ministry to enhancing the national HIS and also the ongoing reforms of the HIS which have taken place in recent years. The reforms have mainly focused on enhancing the health management information system. Donor-funded data or disease-specific platforms are available that can be built upon and the National Statistics Act (enacted in February 2020), including the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Act which has been drafted, provides an environment that is conducive to supporting HIS strengthening efforts.

During the mission, several limitations in the generation and use of evidence and data to inform decision-making were also identified. The challenges include those in data analysis and use for policy, technical capacity for evidence synthesis, and limited capacity in national programmes for adaptation of public health and clinical guidelines to the national context. Low engagement of the private sector were among the most important limitations.

At the same time, some strong points were identified, including the existence of the department of policy and planning at the Federal Ministy of Health and the National Institute of Health, a member of the regional network of institutions for evidence and data to policy, as well as a few other schools of public health in close collaboration with the Ministry, that can be built upon for gradual capacity-building of the country for evidence-informed policy-making. The willingness of

the policy-makers to enhance national institutional capacity for use of evidence for decision-making is another strong point.

With support from Dr Mamunur Malik, the WHO Representative in Somalia, a meeting was held with other development partners to identify mechanisms to streamline support for HIS strengthening and use of data for decision-making.

WHO will continue working closely with the national stakeholders to implement the key action points that came out of the meeting, such as: establishing a HIS technical working group at the national level led by the Ministry; conducting a comprehensive assessment of the HIS in September 2022, followed by development of a national action plan; technical capacity-building for generation and use of evidence for policy-making that will address policy-makers, policy developers and researchers; and mapping the structures and processes for use of evidence and data in policy-making for health at the national level, including in academic institutions.

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