10 October 2023, Cairo, Egypt – Dr Hanan Balkhy has today been nominated as the next WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean.

Member States voted to nominate Dr Balkhy during a closed meeting at the 70th session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean. The nomination will be submitted to the WHO Executive Board during its 154th session, taking place on 22–27 January 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland. The newly appointed Regional Director will take office on 1 February 2024.

Dr Balkhy will direct international health work across the 22 countries and territories of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, serving a population of 745 million people. She had a distinguished career in medicine, as well as in medical and health-related research, with a special focus on public health challenges. She also has a strong background in the technical and public health sectors at the national, regional and international levels. Prior to her nomination as Regional Director, Dr Balkhy had been the Assistant Director-General for Antimicrobial Resistance at the WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland since 2019.

Born in Saudi Arabia, Dr Balkhy was the first Executive Director for Infection Prevention and Control at the Saudi Arabian Ministry of National Guard. Seen as a leading expert at the regional and international levels, Dr Balkhy has provided important guidance to the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and WHO headquarters, which has had a significant impact.

For more than 10 years, she successfully led both the Gulf Cooperation Council Centre for Infection Control and the WHO Collaborating Centre on Infection Prevention and Control and Antimicrobial Resistance. This experience culminated in her appointment as WHO’s first

Assistant Director-General for Antimicrobial Resistance.

Dr Balkhy is the seventh Regional Director nominated to lead the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, and the first female to receive such nomination. Following appointment by the Executive Board at its 154th session in January 2024, she will take over from the current Regional Director, Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, whose 5-year term ends on 31 January 2024.

Sunday 7th of July 2024 04:52:19 AM