



10 October 2022 – This morning, WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean delegates took part in a Walk the Talk event in the Child’s Park opposite the WHO Regional Office.

Led by senior health officials, the event kickstarted the 69th session of the Regional Committee. Starting at 07:30 with a walk through the park, the gentle stroll was followed by more energetic kicking of footballs.

Journalists from regional and local TV channels, newspapers and news agencies flocked to the Child’s Park to cover the first in-person RC-related event since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sir Magdy Yaacoub, the prominent heart surgeon and founder of the Magdi Yacoub Heart Foundation, was guest of honor.

Health starts at home



“It is important that when we gather to discuss the health of people and of future generations our discussions are then converted into action. We must Walk the Talk,” said Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, as he greeted guests to the Park.

WHO's Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus reminded participants that health does not begin in hospitals and clinics but starts in our homes, streets, communities, schools and workplaces.



“Health promotion and disease prevention should be every country and person’s first priority,” said Dr Ghebreyesus. He added the hope that the upcoming World Cup, the first to be held in the Region, will inspire millions of fans to get up from the couch and become more active.

Given the lead-up to the first World Cup, it was entirely appropriate that the event should showcase Sport for Health, a partnership between WHO, the State of Qatar and FIFA which promotes sport as a way to cultivate healthy communities and societies.

Young people participating in the event shared their own hopes for the future.

Echoing the slogan of this year’s Regional Committee – “Together for a healthier and sustainable tomorrow” – 16-year-old Ella Hammerich said: “When I think about a healthy and sustainable future, I think of the world in which I want my children to live, a world where they will be able to go to school beneath blue, unpolluted skies and exercise outdoors without breathing toxic air.”

But as they looked towards the future, participants were reminded that COVID-19 is still with us.

“Let’s all keep reminding ourselves that the pandemic is not yet over. Let’s all be careful and vigilant in terms of vaccinations, especially those people who are most at risk,” said Dr Ghebreyesus.

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