

20 October 2022 – Elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis has been identified as a global public health priority. It focuses on adopting a harmonized approach to improving health outcomes for mothers and children. The global community has set international and regional goals, and countries are scaling up national programmes to achieve elimination to contribute to the improvement of a broad range of maternal and child health outcomes and contribute to attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 3; target 3 of which aims specifically to reduce global maternal mortality, prevent neonatal and child mortality and combat infectious diseases such as AIDS.

With a focus on universal health coverage, Oman identified the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis as a national priority, and work was initiated to achieve elimination. The process of validation was started in 2019 when the Ministry of Health

established a national team tasked with collecting relevant data and preparing a report. The validation process entailed conducting meetings and reviews with the regional and global validation committee to ensure that the country had met WHO standards for validation. In 2022, Oman was validated as the first country in the Eastern Mediterranean Region to have successfully eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis.

In recognition of Oman's achievement, the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the WHO country office, organized a special event and other countries were encouraged to follow Oman's example. The event was held under the auspices of H.E. Dr Hilal bin Ali Al-Sabti, Minister of Health and it was attended by Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, Dr Jean Jabbour, WHO Representative to Oman, Dr Shereen El-Feki, Director, Regional Support Team, UNAIDS, representatives of UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund, international partners and officials from ministries of health in the Region. WHO's Director-General and UNICEF's Regional Director delivered recorded speeches on the occasion.

Oman will continue to work towards achieving Global Validation Advisory Committee recommendations to maintain elimination status and continue efforts to sustain this achievement and build on the certification to receive validation for elimination of mother-to-child transmission of hepatitis B.

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