



19 May 2016 – The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Office for Arab States (UNESCO – Arab States) and the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean have a long history of collaboration on bioethics.

On 9 May 2016, Dr Ghaith Fariz, UNESCO Regional Director, and Dr Ala Alwan, WHO Regional Director, met at the WHO Regional Office in Cairo to pursue and enhance collaboration between the 2 organizations aimed at streamlining the complementary work of UNESCO and WHO in the field of bioethics in the Region. During the meeting, the need for greater strategic cooperation between the 2 organizations was discussed to include ethics in health care, education, research and in dealing with the pressing needs of populations of the Region and in recognition of the fact that health and education are inseparable.

It was agreed that a plan of action would be developed with clear identification of the roles and responsibilities of each agency in line with regional bioethics priorities, which are feasible to implement, and of highest impact on the Region's populations.

The plan will be a joint initiative to pursue the common objectives of the 2 organizations in the areas of bioethics, with special emphasis on establishment of national bioethics committees, health professional education, disaster ethics, as well as cooperation towards achieving the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals related to health and education. By joining forces, UNESCO and WHO can provide a model of positive collaboration for the improvement of the 2 pillars for social development – health and education – and will provide a model of interagency collaboration for sustainable development in the Region.

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