



World Health
Organization

Bahrain

Biannual Newsletter

WHO BAHRAIN COUNTRY OFFICE

01
issue

January - June
2023



a call for
solidarity
and action

75

HEALTH
FOR ALL

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Welcoming Notes from WHO Representative



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain

Welcome to our first newsletter edition of the World Health Organization (WHO) Country Office in Bahrain. This newsletter highlights the key activities and initiatives of the WHO Country Office between January and June 2023, which were successfully implemented thanks to the steadfast support of the Ministry of Health, the continued guidance of our WHO colleagues at the regional and headquarters levels, and the trust of the people of Bahrain.

On the next pages of this newsletter, we shall endeavour to showcase our efforts to strengthen our footprint on the ground towards achieving the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Bahrain, while also keeping our sights on the Triple Billion targets of the WHO Thirteenth General Programme of Work (GPW 13) 2019–2023 and the aspirations of WHO's regional Vision 2023 to achieve Health for All by All.

Together, for a healthier and sustainable tomorrow.

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LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND:

Bahrain Joins in the Second High-level Tri-Regional Meeting on Refugees and Migrants' Health

The experience of migration is a key determinant of health and well-being. Refugees and migrants continue to be among the most vulnerable members of society and are frequently at increased risk of poor health outcomes due to inadequate living and working conditions, different forms of discrimination, and lack of access to timely and high-quality health care, among other factors. The COVID-19 pandemic has posed additional challenges both in terms of increased risk of infection and death experienced by refugees and migrants, while also highlighting existing inequities in access to and utilization of health services.

The Eastern Mediterranean is the WHO region with the largest number of refugees and internally displaced persons. The region is home to more than half of the world's refugees, the majority of whom continue to live there. In efforts to ensure that refugees and migrants have access to health care across the migration route during emergencies and beyond, the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, in collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for Africa and the WHO Regional Office for Europe, organized the "Second High-level Tri-Regional Meeting on Refugees and Migrants' Health" in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, from 16 to 17 March 2023.

The meeting aimed to move forward the implementation of the strategic priorities agreed at last year's high-level meeting



The Bahrain delegation and WHO Representative, Bahrain, participate in the "Second High-level Tri-Regional Meeting on Refugees and Migrants' Health", 16-17 March 2023, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt

on refugee and migrant health in Istanbul, Türkiye, through interregional collaboration as part of a whole-of-route approach. It also aspired to reaffirm commitment to the WHO Global Action Plan on Promoting the Health of Refugees and Migrants, and to facilitate the exchange of experiences in promoting the health of refugees and migrants in the three regions. It brought together governments, civil society and health partners. Among the key participating countries was the Kingdom of Bahrain, represented by HE Dr Waleed Khalifa Al Manea, Undersecretary of Ministry of Health; Dr Aysha Ahmed, Chief of Medical Commissions, Ministry of Health; and Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain.

Organized in the wake of

the devastating earthquakes in the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye, as well as at a time when other crises were in play, the meeting echoed commitments to prioritize refugee and migrant health on international and regional agendas, underpinned by the principles of solidarity, human rights and sustainable development. The meeting concluded with the commitment of the WHO African, European and Eastern Mediterranean regions, and the participants to concerted action to strengthen progress toward achieving universal health coverage, and to promote inclusion of refugees and migrants in national health policies and plans across routes of migration and in humanitarian settings.

Bahrain Participates in the Regional Meeting on Health Workforce in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: from COVID-19 Learning to Action

Health systems can only function with health workers; improving health service coverage and realizing the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is dependent on their availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality. To this end, the WHO Regional Office for Eastern Mediterranean hosted the “Regional Meeting on Health Workforce in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: from COVID-19 Learning to Action” in Cairo, Egypt, from 19 to 20 June 2023. The meeting aimed to identify effective strategies and actions drawn from COVID-19 lessons learned to address health workforce challenges, and to agree on a call to action to accelerate health workforce actions in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

The meeting brought together representatives from health, education, labour, and finance sectors with the recognition that health workforce challenges can only be addressed through intersectoral approaches. Bahrain had a significant online and in-person presence at the meeting, represented by HE Dr Waleed Khalifa Al Manea, Undersecretary of Ministry of Health; Mrs Entesar Naser Alromaithi, Acting Director of Human and Financial Resources, Ministry of Health; Dr Mariam Athbi Al Jalahama, Chief Executive Officer of the National Health Regulatory Authority; and Dr Zubaida Abdulla Al Shaikh, Chief, Health Profession Regulation, National Health Regulatory Authority.

Other expert attendees from the Kingdom of Bahrain included

Dr Leena Mohammad Khonji, Director of WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing Development in Bahrain and Dean of College of Health and Sport Sciences at the University of Bahrain; Professor Abdelhalim Deifalla, Director of WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Professionals’ Educational Development and Dean of Arabian Gulf University’s College of Medicine and Medical Sciences; and Dr Fariba Al-Darazi, former Coordinator Health Workforce Development and Regional Adviser for Nursing, Midwifery

and Allied Health Personnel at the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean.

During the meeting, HE Dr Waleed Khalifa Al Manea, Undersecretary of Ministry of Health, and Dr Mariam Athbi Al Jalahama, Chief Executive Officer of National Health Regulatory Authority, took part in a number of panel discussions around strengthening the availability, competencies, and performance of health workforce in the region, drawing from Bahrain’s experiences and good practices.



HE Dr Waleed Khalifa Al Manea, Undersecretary of Ministry of Health, participates in a panel discussion during the “Regional Meeting on Health Workforce in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: from COVID-19 Learning to Action,” 19-20 June 2023, Cairo, Egypt



The Bahrain delegation and Dr Naeema Al-Gasseer, WHO Representative in Egypt, participate in the “Regional Meeting on Health Workforce in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: from COVID-19 Learning to Action,” 19-20 June 2023, Cairo, Egypt

WHO Launches Initiative to Assess Staffing Needs at Primary Healthcare Level

Under the direction of the Supreme Council of Health, Ministry of Health, and Primary Healthcare Centres, the WHO Country Office in Bahrain launched an initiative to identify the health workforce requirements at primary healthcare level using the Workload Indicators of Staffing Needs (WISN) methodology. This initiative is planned to be first piloted in two cadres, namely doctors and nurses, at 6 primary healthcare facilities. Then, it will be extended to all health professionals at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels.

The WISN methodology helps to determine how many health workers of a particular type are required to cope with the workload of a given health facility and assesses the workload pressure of health workers in that facility. It uses the data available in health information systems and

provides options for closing gaps in workforce availability.

Initial efforts included the formation of three implementation groups: a steering committee to lead and monitor the overall implementation process; a technical taskforce to carry out the day-to-day implementation activities; and an expert working group to define workload components and set activity standards for the targeted cadres. The WISN technical taskforce is led by Dr Zahra Bader, Strategic Health Planning Advisor, Supreme Council of Health, and it includes five experts from Primary Healthcare Centres.

Following that, a capacity-building workshop was conducted in Manama from 26 to 30 March 2023, in close collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean. It aimed to build the capacities

of the technical taskforce on the WISN method, as well as provide the expert working group with a platform to define workload components and set activity standards.

The workshop was inaugurated by HE Lieutenant-General Dr Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Chairman of the Supreme Council of Health; Dr Ejlal Al-Alawi, Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health; HE Dr Lulwa Showaiter, CEO of Primary Healthcare Centres; and Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain.

It brought together more than 25 participants from the Ministry of Health, Primary Healthcare Centres, and Arabian Gulf University. During the workshop, participants were trained via a blended learning approach of presentations, working groups, and open discussions. The final day of the workshop included a field visit to the Bahrain & Kuwait Health Centre – Hidd Primary Healthcare Centre to compare the staffing and health service activities discussed during the training with the actual situation on the ground.

Moving forward, the WHO Country Office in Bahrain is planning a mission to Muscat, Oman, in July 2023, in close coordination with the WHO Country Office in Oman, to facilitate the exchange of experiences, lessons learned and best practices on the use and implementation of the WISN methodology between Bahrain and Oman. Bahrain's delegation will include the WISN technical taskforce, under the lead of the Supreme Council of Health, as well as Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain.



HE the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Health inaugurates the WISN workshop, 26-30 March 2023, Manama, Bahrain

BUILDING BACK BETTER:

Bahrain First to Organize Simulation Exercise Training of Trainers



Group photo of the experts participating in the simulation exercise training of trainers, 20-22 February 2023, Manama, Bahrain

Public health emergency

simulation exercises play a role in identifying the strengths and gaps in health system capacities, and lay out the practical corrective actions needed to develop and implement pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response (PPR) capacities at national and subnational levels. To this end, the WHO Country Office in Bahrain organized a three-day simulation exercise training of trainers in Manama, from 20 to 22 February 2023, under the overall direction of the Ministry of Health.

The training aimed at strengthening the country's pandemic PPR to various public health emergencies via assessing and testing preparedness and response plans, procedures, and systems for all hazards and capabilities. It was inaugurated by Dr Ejlal Al-Alawi, Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health, and Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO

Representative, Bahrain. Key facilitators included the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and the Gulf Center for Disease Prevention and Control.

Bahrain is the first country in the Eastern Mediterranean region to host a simulation exercise training of trainers. By championing this type of

trainings, Bahrain is setting a powerful example to other countries in the region on the importance of building back better and investing in future capacities to strengthen pandemic PPR and recovery capacities both within and across national borders.

Over the course of the three days, the training built



The multisectoral participation we have witnessed this week is key. Coming together with colleagues and institutions representing a wide range of complementary skills and fields provides a strong platform to build common understanding and shared development plans . . . This practical and collaborative approach will enhance experiences, while developing readiness to structure future capacity building exercises, based on realistic lived settings, and to benefit the stability of health security across the country.”

Dr Adel Al-Sayyad, Chief of Disease Control section, Public Health Directorate, Ministry of Health



Participants engaging with the EMRO facilitator in the simulation exercise training of trainers, 20-22 February 2023, Manama, Bahrain

“**The Simulation Exercise came at the right time. Building on the momentum of the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthening knowledge and improving skills . . . [are] important to continue developing national preparedness in the face of emerging infectious or non-infectious health threats. The exercise itself is well structured, allowing for flexibility in terms of broadening participant thinking in how to address the development of a roadmap to better tackle emerging events.**”

Dr Manaf Al Qahtani, Infectious Diseases Consultant, Bahrain Defense Force (BDF) Hospital, Government Hospitals

“**I gained new experiences in participating in this IHR simulation-based scenarios, as the structure builds relevance in our daily work . . . and prepares mindsets in relation to emergency situations we could face in future. Testing preparedness plans on the ground can improve planning ahead of any emergencies in future . . . while playing out these situations can add value to build skills for the next generation as well. I would like to see these exercises continue to benefit real-life scenarios.**”

Dr Basma Al Saffar, Head of Immunization Group, Public Health Directorate, Ministry of Health

the skills and capacities of 30 participants from different sectors, including the Ministry of Health (Public Health Directorate), Primary Healthcare Centres, Government Hospitals, Supreme Council for Environment, in addition to Ministries of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture, Transportation and Telecommunication, and Interior. It employed a blended learning approach of presentations, group work, and plenary discussions to help participants identify and address gaps in emergency response, while also developing experience in simulated emergency settings.

Simulation exercises are one of the four complementary components of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR) developed by WHO to support countries in monitoring and enhancing their core capacities under IHR (2005). The remaining three components are State Party Annual Report, the Joint External Evaluation, and After Action Reviews.

FOUR CITIES AND COUNTING:

WHO Presents Healthy Cities Awards to Busaiteen/Al-Sayah and A'ali

“The development of the WHO Healthy Cities programme across Bahrain provides a tangible example of the effects of sustainable urban living on our quality of life. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Health in Bahrain, and with proactive displays of dedication and commitment by the Governorates, community-based approaches provide the building blocks to support health and well-being opportunities.”

Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain



A'ali is awarded the Healthy City status, 26 February 2023, Northern Governorate, Bahrain

As a result of rapid urbanization, cities around the globe have undergone a notable transformation over the past two decades which, in turn, is exposing the population to a wide range of environmental, social, economic and behavioural factors that impact health and well-being. In response to these challenges, Bahrain is implementing key WHO initiatives such as Healthy Cities that synergize multisectoral actions on addressing health determinants and promoting equity and sustainable development. The Healthy City status is awarded to cities around the world that meet the criteria set by WHO.

In 2022, WHO awarded the Healthy City status to two Bahraini cities, Busaiteen/Al-Sayah in the Muharraq Governorate, and A'ali in the Northern Governorate, bringing the total number of Healthy Cities in the country to four. Umm-Al-Hassam was the first city in Bahrain to be

designated as a Healthy City in 2018, followed by Manama in 2021 — the first capital in the Eastern Mediterranean Region to earn the Healthy City distinction.

The awarding ceremony of Busaiteen/Al-Sayah and A'ali was held on 26 February 2023. The Healthy Cities awards were presented by Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO

Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, in the presence of HE Dr Jaleela bint AISayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health; Mr Salman bin Isa bin Hindi AlMannai, Governor of Muharraq Governorate; Mr Ali bin AlShaikh Abdulhussain AlAsfoor, Governor of Northern Governorate; and Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain.



Busaiteen/Al-Sayah is awarded the Healthy City status, 26 February 2023, Muharraq Governorate, Bahrain

WHO Awards Five Health-Promoting Universities in Bahrain

“By developing the WHO Healthy Universities programme, the leadership in Bahrain continues to show commitment, not only in adding value across national settings, but in advancing sustainable development across regional and global environments as well.”

*Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari,
WHO Regional Director for
the Eastern Mediterranean*

The WHO Health-Promoting Universities programme embodies a settings-based approach to health promotion, recognizing higher education institutions as important contributors to sustainable development through their key role in protecting and advancing the health and well-being of students, staff and the wider community.

In 2023, five universities in Bahrain were designated as Health-Promoting Universities. These are the Ahlia University, Arabian Gulf University, Kingdom University, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland - Medical University of Bahrain, and University of Technology Bahrain.

The designation process was ushered in by the technical leadership and expert advice of the WHO Country Office in Bahrain, together with the Ministry of Health and Higher Education Council, to the universities on

submitting their self-assessments in December 2022. Following that, a delegation from the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean conducted field visits between 17-19 January 2023, in close coordination with the WHO Country Office in Bahrain, to evaluate each university based on global accreditation standards, ensuring its eligibility for the Health-Promoting University status.

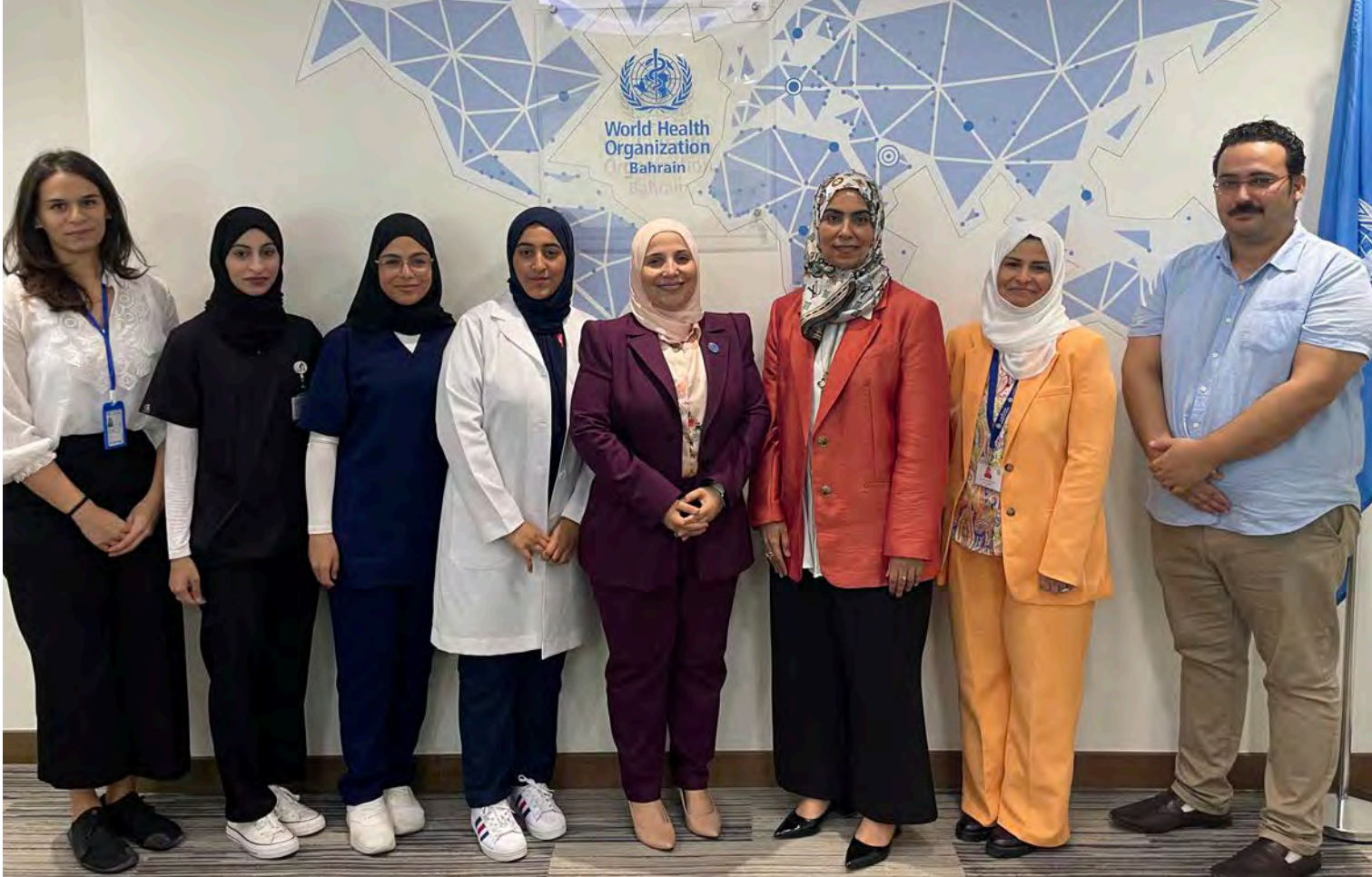
The awarding ceremony of the five universities was held on 26 February 2023. The Health-Promoting Universities awards were presented by Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, in the presence of HE Dr Jaleela bint AISayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health; HE Dr Shaikha Rana bint Isa bin Duajj Al-Khalifa, Secretary-General of the Higher Education Council; and Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain.



Awarding ceremony of the WHO Health-Promoting Universities, 26 February 2023, Manama, Bahrain

GROW FOOD, NOT TOBACCO:

Nursing Students Create Posters for World No Tobacco Day



The World No Tobacco Day art campaign winning students and the delegation from the University of Bahrain visit the WHO Country Office, 31 May 2023, Manama, Bahrain

On the occasion of World No Tobacco Day, the WHO Country Office in Bahrain launched a Call-to-Action poster campaign to help raise awareness about the high toll of tobacco growing on human health and the environment. It featured an invitation for medical, paramedical and nursing students in Bahrain to create posters that highlight the benefits of moving away from tobacco growing and switching to more sustainable crops that improve food security and nutrition.

The World No Tobacco Day is observed every year on the

31st of May to raise awareness on the harmful and deadly effects of tobacco use. The Call-to-Action poster campaign was designed in line with this year's theme, "Grow food, not tobacco", which urges countries to end subsidies for tobacco farming and encourages farmers to switch to sustainable crops.

Five nursing students from the College of Health and Sport Sciences, the University of Bahrain, submitted their Call-to-Action posters. They are Mariam Mohammed Abdulla Alasbool, Sajidah Abbas Khamis Marzooq,

Zahra Abdulghani Khamis, Nariman Ahmed Al Khayat, and Fatema Abdul Hasan Ayyad.

Accompanied by Dr Leena Mohammad Khonji, Director of WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing Development in Bahrain and Dean of College of Health and Sport Sciences at the University of Bahrain, the five students visited the WHO Country Office on World No Tobacco Day to present their Call-to-Action posters in person and to receive certificates of recognition from Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain.

WINNING ARTWORK

Students from the College of Health and Sport Sciences, the University of Bahrain

World No Tobacco Day – 31 May 2023



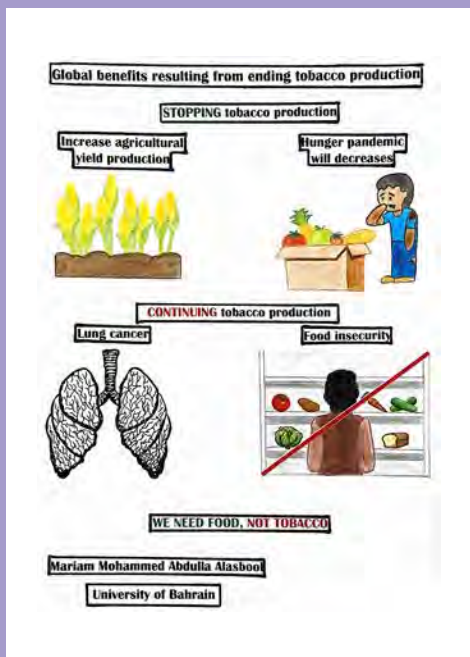
Fatema Abdul Hasan Ayyad



Nariman Ahmed Al Khayat

Grow Food Not Tobacco

<https://www.emro.who.int/bahrain/news/world-no-tobacco-day-call-to-action-poster-campaign.html>



Mariam Mohammed Abdulla Alasbool



Sajidah Abbas Khamis Marzooq



Zahra Abdulghani Khamis

Snapshot of Bahrain's Engagement in WHO Global and Regional Meetings

The WHO Country Office in Bahrain is providing leadership and strategic support to drive public health impact towards achieving universal health coverage, addressing health emergencies and promoting healthier populations through strengthening Bahrain's engagement in global and regional health fora. Between January – June 2023, the WHO Country Office facilitated the participation of more than 100 experts from the Ministry of Health and other health-related sectors in key global and regional WHO meetings and workshops.



Dr Ameera Ali Al Nooh, Consultant Family Medicine and Public Health, Public Health Directorate, Ministry of Health; and Nada Mohamed, Lead Public Health Consultant, WHO Country Office in Bahrain, participate in the "World Health Organization Climate Change and Health Training of Trainers for WHO African and Eastern Mediterranean Regional Experts," 23-26 January 2023, Aqaba, Jordan



Dr Ejlal Al-Alawi, Undersecretary for Public Health, Ministry of Health, participates as the subcommittee vice-chair in "The Sixteenth meeting of the Regional Committee Programme Subcommittee," 22-23 February 2023, Cairo, Egypt



Dr Kawthar AlEid, Public Health Consultant, Public Health Directorate, Ministry of Health; and Ms Amal Jafar AlYaqoob, Precious Metal Specialist, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, taking part in the "Regional Meeting on the implementation of Articles 9 & 10 of the WHO FCTC", 12-14 March 2023, Cairo, Egypt



Mrs Amjad Ghanem, Chief of Public Health Laboratories, Ministry of Health attending the "Sixth Meeting of the Eastern Mediterranean Acute Respiratory Infection Surveillance (EMARIS) Network and the Third Scientific Conference on Acute Respiratory Infection in the Eastern Mediterranean Region," 13-15 March 2023, Muscat, Oman

Dr Adel Al-Sayyad, Chief of Disease Control section, Public Health Directorate, Ministry of Health; Mrs Amjad Ghanem, Chief of Public Health Laboratories and Acting Director of Public Health; and Dr Deena Al Khamis, Public Health Officer, WHO Country Office in Bahrain, and participants from the GCC attend the "Tenth Regional Stakeholders Meeting to Review the Implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) in the Eastern Mediterranean Region," 18-21 March 2023, Cairo, Egypt



Dr Adel Al-Sayyad, Chief of Disease Control section, Public Health Directorate, Ministry of Health; Eng. Noor Ebrahim Abdulla, Environmental Specialist, Supreme Council for Environment; and Ms Nada Mohamed, Lead Public Health Consultant, WHO Country Office in Bahrain, taking part in the "Quadripartite Regional Meeting to accelerate the implementation of One Health in the Eastern Mediterranean Region," 08-11 May 2023, Muscat, Oman





Ms Shanine Mohebat
WHO BAHRAIN

Dr Basma Al-Saffar
BAHRAIN

Dr Adel Salman Al-Sayyad
BAHRAIN

Dr Adel Al-Sayyad, Chief of Disease Control section, Public Health Directorate, Ministry of Health; Dr Basma Al Saffar, Head of Immunization Group, Public Health Directorate, Ministry of Health; and Shanine Mohebat, Health Promotion Officer, WHO Country Office in Bahrain, participate in the "Consultative meeting on the development of the regional Life Course Immunization," 14-16 May 2023w3, Amman, Jordan



Dr Afaf Merza, Public Health Consultant, Public Health Directorate, Ministry of Health, participates in the "World Health Organization Climate Change and Health 'Training of Trainers' for WHO African and Eastern Mediterranean Regional Experts and Workshop on DHIS2 as an electronic platform for Integrated Disease Surveillance," 14-18 May 2023, Cairo, Egypt



Dr Eshraq Abdulaziz AlAmer, Child Protection and Development Consultant, Government Hospitals, participate in the "Training of trainers on the health system response to violence against children in the Eastern Mediterranean Region," 11-15 June 2023, Cairo, Egypt



Dr Jehad Ali Bin Rajab, Emergency Medicine Consultant, Government Hospitals, participates in the "Regional Meeting to Establish and Strengthen Emergency Medical Teams in the Eastern Mediterranean Region," 13-15 June 2023, Hammamet, Tunisia

Health and Wellbeing at the Heart of the 146th Assembly of Inter-Parliamentary Union in Manama

At the invitation of the Parliament of Bahrain, the 146th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and its related meetings were held in Exhibition World Bahrain, Sakhir, from 11 to 15 March 2023.

The IPU is an international organization of parliaments that was established in 1889. It is made of around 179 Member Parliaments and 14 Associate Members. The IPU facilitates parliamentary diplomacy and empowers parliamentarians to

promote peace, democracy and sustainable development.

Building on its longstanding collaboration with the IPU, WHO actively participated in the 146th Assembly and its related meetings, recognizing the pivotal role parliamentarians play in public health through reviewing laws and approving public policies, reviewing and approving national budgets, monitoring the work of government to ensure accountability, and representing the needs and interests of their constituents.

The WHO delegation from all three levels of the organisation, including Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain, actively engaged in the General Debate, which was held under the theme of “Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance.” During the General Debate, the parliamentary community identified the factors underlying intolerance and division, and shared good practices on sustainable approaches to promoting inclusion and supporting peaceful coexistence.

Moreover, WHO participated in a number of other joint activities at the 146th IPU Assembly. This collaborative work included the launch of the IPU-WHO Handbook on Universal Health Coverage (UHC), which follows up on the 2019 IPU resolution on UHC. The handbook outlines tools and approaches parliamentarians can use to operationalize the UHC vision of their country. WHO also held a side event on leveraging the role of parliamentarians to progress towards UHC, with a focus on practical opportunities for action at country level. WHO and IPU co-organised a workshop on sexual and reproductive health, with a focus on comprehensive sexuality education.

The 146th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary and its associated meeting delivered a resonant message on how the long-standing partnership between WHO and IPU to enhance parliamentary engagement is now more important than ever to ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all throughout life.



WHO Representative, Bahrain, engaging in discussion at the 146th Assembly of IPU in Bahrain 11-15 March 2023, Sakhir, Bahrain



Left to Right: Gaudenz Silberschmidt, Director Health and Multilateral Partnerships, WHO HQ; Dr Stella Chungong, Director, Health Security Preparedness Department, WHO Health Emergencies Programme, WHO HQ; Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain; and Dr Hala Abou Taleb, Regional Advisor for Health System Governance, WHO EMRO

Key Highlights from International Fora: Bahrain in the 76th World Health Assembly

The World Health Assembly (WHA) is the decision-making body of WHO and is attended by delegations from all 194 Member States. The 76th WHA was held from 21 to 30 May 2023 in Geneva,

Switzerland, under the theme of “saving lives, driving health for all”. It opened on a celebratory note marking the 75th anniversary of WHO’s foundation in 1948 and its role in improving public health.

KEY HIGHLIGHT #1

To kickstart WHA76, Bahrain’s delegation walked alongside high-level government representatives, United Nations officials, athletes, performers, and the community at large in the “Walk the Talk: Health for All challenge” to promote physical and mental health and celebrate the importance of partnership during WHO’s 75th anniversary.

HE Dr Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health, the Bahrain delegation, and WHO Representative, Bahrain, participate in the Walk the Talk: Health for All challenge, 21-30 May 2023, Geneva, Switzerland



KEY HIGHLIGHT #2

HE Dr Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health, was elected by acclamation as Chair of Committee A of WHA76, which discusses key technical areas such as universal health coverage, primary healthcare and emergency preparedness. This is the first time that the head of Bahrain’s delegation has held such a position within the WHO governing body, demonstrating the Minister’s unwavering commitment to achieving health for all by all and her unique roles and contributions to public health at national and regional levels.



Committee A Chair HE Dr Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health (left) and Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General (right) during WHA76, 21-30 May 2023, Geneva, Switzerland



HE Dr Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health, launches the side event on “The WHO acceleration plan to stop obesity: from endorsement at WHA75 to execution in frontrunner countries”, 21-30 May 2023, Geneva, Switzerland

KEY HIGHLIGHT #3

On the sideline of WHA76, the government of Bahrain organized a side event, in close collaboration with WHO and the SUN movement, on “WHO acceleration plan to STOP obesity: from endorsement at WHA75 to execution in frontrunner countries.” The organization of this side event proceeds from the selection of Bahrain among the first 25 frontrunner countries globally to implement the WHO acceleration plan to STOP obesity – a plan introduced in WHA75 to support countries in catalysing national action against the obesity epidemic.

The side event aimed to mark the start of the execution phase of the acceleration plan in the frontrunner countries, provide champions in the fight against obesity with a platform to voice their aspirations for the acceleration plan, and raise political advocacy to support and finance the response to the obesity epidemic in the frontrunner countries.



Dr Mariam Athbi Al Jalahma, Chief Executive Officer, National Health Regulatory Authority, awarded as a 2023 laureate of the Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion, 21-30 May 2023, Geneva, Switzerland

KEY HIGHLIGHT #4

Dr Mariam Athbi Al Jalahma, Chief Executive Officer of Bahrain’s National Health Regulatory Authority, was awarded the 2023 Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion. This was part of a moving ceremony, organized following the closure of the WHA76 session, to honour individuals and institutions from around the world for their exceptional contributions to public health. The award was presented to Dr Al Jalahma in recognition of her commitment to health promotion and the pivotal role she played in the development of national and regional strategies in primary healthcare, child, and adolescent health, noncommunicable diseases, and anti-smoking efforts.

Bahrain Prepares Second Voluntary National Review on Sustainable Development Goals

Reaffirming its commitment to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Bahrain is to present its second voluntary national review (VNR) at the 2023 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), planned from 10 to 19 July 2023. The first VNR was presented in 2018 and prepared under the leadership of the Ministries of Cabinet Affairs and Foreign Affairs. The preparation of the second VNR is assigned to the Ministry of Sustainable Development, which was recently established in 2022.

VNRs are voluntary and state-led reviews of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. They provide a platform for countries to exchange experiences, challenges, and lessons learned, and to put forward concrete actions to accelerate progress towards leaving no one behind.

The preparation process of the second VNR commenced at the end of 2022, and it benefited from specialized technical guidance and advice provided through United Nations (UN) multi-agency efforts, under the direction of the Resident Coordinator's Office. This included, but was

not limited to, supporting the development of the VNR roadmap, guiding the design and implementation of the national consultation processes, and providing technical input on the VNR draft report.

Since the launch of the VNR process, the WHO Country Office, under the leadership of Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain, has been active in the discussions with the Ministry of Sustainable Development around the government's expectations for UN support. A special focus has also been given to establishing a fruitful collaborative relationship with the Ministry to ensure better coordination and collaboration beyond the preparation of the VNR.

Furthermore, the WHO Country Office in Bahrain provided expert support in the national consultations conducted with key stakeholders to ensure an inclusive and participatory approach to the preparation of the VNR. Dr Atatrah moderated the consultation workshop with the government. This was one of six consultations that were organized in February 2023, engaging stakeholders such as parliamentarians, academia,

civil society, private sector, women and youth. During the consultation, Dr Atatrah invited participants to take stock of the progress and discuss challenges in the implementation of the 2023 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to identify emerging issues that need to be collectively addressed.

The WHO Country Office was also actively involved, under the guidance of Dr Atatrah, in the three review rounds of the VNR report, offering support and guidance to the authorship team when needed. The feedback provided, particularly on the health and wellbeing chapter, reflected WHO's guidance and recommendations.

The VNR report has been finalized and shared with the Cabinet in May 2023 to be endorsed before its presentation at the HLPF in July 2023. The draft report provides an evidence-based review of Bahrain's progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals since the submission of the first VNR in 2018, showcasing national achievements in a number of areas, including health, education, and economic diversification.



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain, leads the stakeholder consultation on health as part of the preparations of Bahrain's second Voluntary National Review, 13 February 2023, Manama, Bahrain - Photo Credit: National Communication Centre

WHO Joins Celebrations of National and International Days in Bahrain

#BAHRAIN SPORTS DAY



The WHO Country Office join the Ministry of Health in celebrating Bahrain Sports Day, 9 February 2023, Manama, Bahrain - Photo Credit: Ministry of Health

The WHO Country Office joined the Ministry of Health in celebrating Bahrain Sports Day, which is observed annually on the 9th of February to raise awareness

of the myriad of benefits of physical activity for health and human development. A physically active lifestyle is proven to reduce the risk of noncommunicable

diseases, protect against risk factors like hypertension, overweight, and obesity, and improve mental health.

Bahrain Sports Day included a wide range of activities such as health screenings, and a walkathon by senior Ministry of Health officials to promote active lifestyles. The national day also marked the soft opening of a new Health and Sports Recreation Centre at the Ministry of Health. The nationwide celebration of Bahrain Sports Day reflects the unwavering commitment of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, to promoting physical activity for all.

#BAHRAIN YOUTH DAY

Today's generation of young people is the largest in history. It is also a tremendous resource for leadership, ideas, and collaboration. Given the right support, knowledge and capabilities, many young people could drive change to ensure a healthy and sustainable future for the planet. Recognizing their critical role as agents of change, the WHO Country Office joined the Ministry of Health in marking Bahrain Youth Day, observed every year on the 25th of March.

The celebration was inaugurated by HE Dr Jaleela bint AISayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health, and it brought together key government officials, youth



The WHO Country Office join the Ministry of Health in celebrating Bahrain Youth Day, 25 March 2023, Manama, Bahrain - Photo Credit: Ministry of Health

champions, and the community at large. Throughout the day, information was disseminated to raise youth's awareness about the

harmful effects of smoking and sugary drink consumption, and to promote healthy lifestyles and physical activity.

#WORLD HEALTH DAY



The WHO Country Office join the Ministry of Health in celebrating World Health Day, 7 April 2023, Manama, Bahrain - Photo Credit: Ministry of Health

The WHO Country Office in Bahrain joined the Ministry of Health and the international community in observing the World Health Day, which is celebrated globally on the 7th of April every year to mark the anniversary of the founding of WHO in 1948. Coinciding with the 75th anniversary of WHO, this year's World Health Day provided an opportunity to look back at the public health successes that

contributed to improving the quality of life over the past seven decades.

The Ministry of Health observed the World Health Day with a Ghabga event, giving the occasion a distinctively local flavour. The event was inaugurated by HE Lieutenant General Dr Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Chairman of the Supreme Council of Health; HE Dr Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan, Minister

of Health; and Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain. als from Primary Healthcare Centres, Government Hospitals, and the National Health Regulatory Authority. During the event, a number of employees from the Ministry of Health were acknowledged for their exceptional contributions to the health sector and were presented with certificates of appreciation.

#WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY

The WHO Country Office in Bahrain participated in an awareness raising event organized by the Health and Social Affairs Directorate of the Ministry of Interior, in close collaboration with the Royal Academy of Police, to observe the World No Tobacco Day which is celebrated every year on the 31st of May. The event highlighted the dangers of tobacco use by presenting the Ministry's internal and external efforts through its various community partnerships.

In her opening remarks, Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain, commended Bahrain's longstanding efforts in fighting the



The WHO Country Office participates in the Health and Social Affairs Directorate of the Ministry of Interior and the Royal Academy of Police World No Tobacco Day awareness raising event, 31 May 2023, Jaw, Bahrain - Photo Credit: Ministry of Interior

tobacco epidemic and protecting the health and wellbeing of future generations. She further noted that tobacco control is not only central to accelerating progress

towards SDG3—achieving health and wellbeing for all—but it is also integrated within other goals which are impacted by tobacco growth and use.

WHO Representative meets with the Director-General of the Mohamed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa Academy for Diplomatic Studies



HE Dr Shaikha Muneera Khalifa Al Khalifa, Director-General of the Mohamed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa Academy for Diplomatic Studies meets with Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain, 16 February 2023, Manama, Bahrain – Photo Credit: Mohamed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa Academy for Diplomatic Studies

HE Dr Shaikha Muneera Khalifa Al Khalifa, Director-General of the Mohamed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa Academy for Diplomatic Studies, met with Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, Bahrain. The aim of the meeting was to explore the strengths and opportunities in building national capacities in the field of Health Diplomacy.

Dr Atatrah expressed her appreciation for receiving copies of the children's book, 'Dana The Diplomat'. This book is a project co-authored and designed by members of the Mohamed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa Academy for Diplomatic Studies. It serves as a personal introduction to the field of diplomacy through a story of Dana's travels around the world.

Former Staff Visit Country Office to Mark WHO 75th Anniversary

On the occasion of WHO 75th Anniversary, two former staff members, Dr Fariba Al Darazi, Former Coordinator Health Workforce Development and Regional Adviser for Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Personnel and Dr Mohammed Al-Khateeb, Former Regional Adviser for Health Education, were invited to the WHO Country Office. The visit offered an opportunity to look back at public health successes that improved the quality of health and wellbeing in Bahrain and throughout the Eastern Mediterranean region generally, as well as to exchange experiences on how to tackle the health challenges of today. The tone of the visit was one of solidarity: whether former or current staff, we are all one WHO.



Former staff members visit the WHO Country Office and mark the WHO 75th Anniversary, 6 April 2023, Manama, Bahrain

WHO Promotes Health and Wellbeing of its Workforce



The WHO Country Office participates in a wellness activity with the Regional Staff Physician as a pre-celebration to Ramadan, 1 February 2023, Manama, Bahrain

The WHO Country Office in Bahrain takes great pride in its workforce, placing their health and wellbeing at the heart of its management strategy. On 1 February 2023, an office visit by Dr Sahar Maklad, Regional Staff Physician at the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, was arranged to provide the WHO Country team with information on the different activities and programs of the Staff Health and Wellbeing Unit. The visit also included a wellness activity where the WHO Country team painted pottery lanterns as a pre-celebration for the holy month of Ramadan.

“ At the WHO Country Office in Bahrain, we prioritize the health and well-being of our team. In line with this, we recently organized a pottery painting activity to promote relaxation and mindfulness. The wellness activity was a great way to celebrate Ramadan and bond as a team.”

Ms Zahra Abdulla, Administrative Assistant

“ Dr Sahar Maklad provided a comprehensive outline of the Staff Health and Well-being Unit at EMRO, in particular, the services provided to WHO Country Offices. The presentation was very insightful and provided context on how to further navigate these services to ensure a safe and healthy workplace.”

Dr Deena Alkhamis, Public Health Officer

Biannual Newsletter

WHO BAHRAIN COUNTRY OFFICE

Meet the Team

Inaugurated in July 2021, the WHO Country Office in Bahrain is the 20th WHO country office to open in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, and the 152nd WHO country office globally. Guided by the WHO's Thirteenth General Programme of Work, the office provides strategic and technical support to the government to achieve universal health coverage,

address health emergencies, and promote healthier populations. It collaborates with national health authorities, United Nations partners, and other health-related stakeholders to foster public health collaboration to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ensure that no one's health is left behind.



Dr Deena Al Khamis,
Public Health Officer



Ms Nada Mohamed,
Lead Public Health Consultant



Ms Shanine Mohebat,
Health Promotion Officer



Ms Sara Bahman,
Communication Officer



Ms Zahra Abdulla,
Administrative Assistant



Mr Elsadiq Elsadiq,
Senior Driver