

Second WHO High-level Interregional Meeting on the Health of Refugees and Migrants

Outcome statement

1. We, the participants of the second High-level Interregional Meeting on Refugees' and Migrants' Health, including representatives of Member States of the WHO African, European and Eastern Mediterranean regions, and other international organizations and development partners, gathered in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, on 16–17 March 2023.
2. The meeting took stock of developments since the first High-level meeting on Health and Migration, which took place in Istanbul, Türkiye in March 2022, and aimed to sustain the momentum and reaffirm our commitments for continued action to promote the health of refugees and migrants in the three WHO regions and beyond.
3. Migration has long been an enduring feature of our three regions. In addition to large flows of labour migration, other health and humanitarian crises such as armed conflict and environmental shocks, as well as economic disparities, continue to cause significant levels of displacement and, at the same time, overwhelm the health systems of many Member States. Such challenges often have a disproportionate effect on the health and livelihoods of refugees and migrants.
4. Building on the lessons and actions of the first high-level meeting, this second meeting focused on advancing universal health coverage for refugees and migrants through a whole-of-route approach. Ensuring sustainability and continuity of health services, prevention and care along the migration trajectory, and inclusion of refugees and migrants in the national health systems of host countries remain the core priorities. Health coverage is not universal if it excludes refugees and migrants.
5. Representatives from the three WHO regions shared good practices as it relates to equitable access to health care for refugees and migrants, including the provision of mental health and psychosocial and disability support.
6. Recognizing, however, that health and well-being are also influenced by the broader socioeconomic and political contexts in which migration and displacement occur, this meeting underscored the importance of including refugees and migrants in emergency preparedness and response strategies, and addressing the social determinants of health, and promoting good governance and strong partnerships for health and migration. These considerations are fully in line with the Strategy to promote the health and well-being of refugees, migrants, IDPs and other displaced populations in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (2023), several declarations and frameworks endorsed by African countries, the upcoming Regional action plan for refugee and migrant health in the WHO European Region 2023–2030, the Global action plan on promoting the health of refugees and migrants (2019–2023), WHO's Thirteenth General Programme of Work (2019–2023), the Bangkok Principles of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
7. Consolidating our experiences, actions and lessons learned, this meeting echoes commitments to prioritize refugee and migrant health on international and regional agendas, underpinned by the principles of solidarity, humanity, human rights and sustainable development. The WHO African, European and Eastern Mediterranean regions, and the participants of this meeting, commit 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. The representatives also commit to work together going forward on forging partnerships and identifying opportunities for collaboration across the migration routes to address some of the most pressing issues we are collectively facing including climate change, the root causes of forced displacement and access to health care for refugees and irregular migrants.