OBJECTIVES:

- To introduce EMRO Commission on Social Determinants of Health (SDH), rationale, objectives and linkages with past WHO Commissions;
- To develop consensus on priority areas, methodology and expected outcome of EMRO Commission; and
- To reflect on policy, practice perspectives regarding SDH agenda and opportunities in EMR.
### Agenda

**02**

#### Closed session of Commission Members

**08:30-09.30**

#### Opening Session

- Welcome
- Opening remarks
- Participants introduction
- Agenda briefing
- Overview of health inequalities and action on SDH in EMR
- Advocacy video screening

**09:30-10.30**

#### Session 1: EMRO Commission and synergies with past commissions

- EMRO Commission on SDH-introduction, conceptual approach, priority areas and expected outcome by Dr Jessica Allen, Deputy Director IHE, UCL
- A comparative analysis of past SDH Commissions by Professor Sir Michael Marmot
- A review of SDH Commissions and reports by Dr Paola Vargas, WHO/EMRO
- Commentary: Dr Nicole Valentine, Coordinator SDH, WHO/HQ

**10:30-11.00**

**PLENARY DISCUSSION**

**Chair: Prof. Sir Michael Marmot**

#### Session 2: Thematic discussion-Violence, conflict and peace

- Violence, conflict and peace by Dr Stephen Gloyd, Professor, University of Washington
- Commentary: Prof. Abdirizak Dalmar, Somali Disaster Resilience Institute, Somalia
- Commentary: Dr Iman Nuwahid, Dean Faculty of Health Sciences AUB, Lebanon

**12:00-13.00**

**PLENARY DISCUSSION**

**Lunch break**

**13:00-14.00**

#### Session 3: Thematic discussion-Child and maternal health, early years and education

- Determinants of maternal and child health by Dr Karima Gholbzouri, Medical Officer, WHO/EMRO
- Early years experiences and education by Dr Jamela-Al Raiby, Regional Adviser, WHO/EMRO
- Commentary: Prof. Anita Zaidi, Director, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Commentary: Dr Salwa Najjab, Director, Juzoor Foundation, Palestine

**14:00-15.00**

**PLENARY DISCUSSION**

**Coffee break**

**15:00-15.15**

#### Session 4: Thematic discussion-Gender inequalities, gender and culture

- Gender inequalities, gender and culture jointly by Dr Nahla Abdel Tawab, Director, Population Council & Dr Hala Sakr, Technical Officer, WHO/EMRO
- Commentary: Dr Hoda Rashad, Director, Social Research Center, American University in Cairo
- Commentary: Prof. Senait Fisseha, Reproductive endocrinologist, Gender/SRH advocate, Director, International Programs, the Susan Buffet Foundation
- Commentary: Ms Sara Fewer, Lancet-SIGHT Commission on peaceful societies through health and gender equality

**15:15-16.15**

**PLENARY DISCUSSION**

**Closed session of Commission Members**

**16:15-17.15**
Session 1: Thematic discussion-Health systems, SDH and Health Equity

- Health care and partnerships beyond health sector to improve health equity by Dr Awad Mataria, A/Director, WHO/EMRO
  
  **Commentary:** Prof. David Bishai, Dept. of Population, Family and Rep. Health, Johns Hopkins University
  
  - Public health sector perspective on reducing health inequalities by Dr Assad Hafeez, Director General Health, Pakistan
    
    **Commentary:** Dr Maha El Rabbat, former Minister of Health & Population of Egypt, MENA Health Policy Forum

PLENARY DISCUSSION

Coffee break

Session 2: Thematic discussion-SDH and disease control agenda

- SDH and Infectious diseases by Dr Hoda Atta, A/Director, Communicable Diseases, WHO/EMRO
  
  **Commentary:** Prof. Rajae Alaouad, Hassan II Academy of Science and Technology, Morocco
  
  - SDH and Non-communicable diseases, mental health by A/Director, Non-Communicable Diseases, WHO/EMRO
    
    **Commentary:** Prof. Srinath Reddy, President, Public Health Foundation of India

PLENARY DISCUSSION

Session 3: Thematic discussion-Environment, climate change and health equity

- Environment, climate change and health equity by Eng. Mazen Malkawi, CEHA/WHO/EMRO
  
  **Commentary:** Dr Mey Jurdi, American University in Beirut, Lebanon
  
  - Commentary: Dr Mohsen Asadi-Lari, DG Int. Affairs, MOHME, IR Iran

PLENARY DISCUSSION

Lunch break

Session 4: SDH Agenda-Translating policy into practice

- Evidence informed policy making and SDH agenda by Dr Arash Rashidian, Director, Science, Information and Dissemination, WHO/EMRO
  
  **Commentary:** Dr Abdul Ghaffar, Executive Director, Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research (AHPSR), WHO/HQ
  
  - Social development and health by Prof. Rowaida Al-Maaitah, former Minister for Government Performance and Minister for Social Development of Jordan
    
    **Commentary:** Development agency perspective on SDH agenda by Ms Erika Placella, Deputy Head, Global Program Health, Swiss, Agency for Development and Cooperation, Switzerland

PLENARY DISCUSSION

Townhall: SDGs and SDH agenda

Session moderator: Dr Jaffar Hussain, Chef de Cabinet, WHO/EMRO

- Pursuing SDGs agenda in EMR-joint presentation by Dr Abdul Ghaffar (AHPSR), Dr Hoda Rashad (AUC)
  
  - Achieving SDGs in conflict affected countries by Minister Plenipotentiary Ms Nada El Agizy, Director of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation Department, League of Arab States

PLENARY DISCUSSION

Concluding remarks by Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, Regional Director, WHO/EMRO

Coffee break

Closed session of Commission Members
World Health Organization Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (WHO/EMRO) is convening a Commission on Social Determinants of Health (SDH) in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. The Commission is jointly being convened by WHO/EMRO, the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research (AHPSR) and the Institute for Health Equity at the University College London (IHE/UCL). Professor Sir Michael Marmot will chair this Commission. The Commission aims to establish a comprehensive evidence base of health inequalities in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, the factors which drive such inequalities; and assess practical ways of addressing these within the context of the Member States of the Region, including those facing conflict and emergencies. The Commission will work over a period of one year: from October 2019 to September 2020. There will be three meetings held in November 2019, April and July 2020, together with virtual meetings. A final report will be prepared, to be published by WHO/EMRO and presented to EMR Regional Committee.

Specifically, the Commission will:

- Analyze and present existing data on health inequalities and social determinants of health, including conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean context;
- Document actions being taken by international organizations, governments, NGOs, civil society and communities to address these issues;
- Build knowledge and evidence for action and offer practical, specific recommendations to reduce health inequalities;
- Provide strategic guidance on developing plans for equity including governance and monitoring systems for health equity; and
- Identify opportunities to build capacity through research and evaluation of health inequities, and programs for action; and establish knowledge networks across the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

WHO Global and Regional strategic visions and programmes

**Thirteenth General Programme of Work**

WHO’s Thirteenth General Programme of Work (GPW 13) 2019-2023 is firmly based on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The mission is to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable. GPW 13 sets three global targets to be achieved in five years:

- Advancing universal health coverage – 1 billion more people benefiting from universal health coverage,
- Addressing health emergencies – 1 billion more people better protected from health emergencies,
- Promoting healthier populations – 1 billion more people enjoying better health and well-being.

EMR Vision 2023

**Expanding universal health coverage** by building equitable, resilient health systems based on primary health care, a people-centred approach and quality and safe services; and focusing on implementing the recommendations of the Salalah Declaration on Universal Health Coverage of 2018; by ensuring that at least 100 million more people benefit from universal health coverage by 2023.

**Addressing health emergencies** through forecasting, comprehensive preparedness, prompt response and well-planned recovery guided by the humanitarian, development and peace nexus; and focusing on ensuring access to health services during emergencies, initiating early recovery and promoting the transition to health and fostering peace.

**Promoting healthier populations** by advocating for Health in All Policies, multisectoral action, community engagement and strategic partnerships with focus on addressing the social and economic determinants of health across the life course, addressing risk factors for health including NCDs and injuries, and leaving no one behind.

**Making transformative changes in WHO** by reforming the Organization’s business models, systems and culture in the Region to ensure that it is fit for business, accountable and a dynamic catalyst in health; by focusing on creating an enabling working environment; strengthening and streamlining strategic communications as a core function; by increasing the availability and sustainability of financial resources for WHO-supported health programmes in the Region; by optimizing the use of those resources, and strengthening WHO’s country presence.
Dr David Bishai
Physician and leading health economist. He is a Professor in the Johns Hopkins University, Department of Population, Family, and Reproductive Health. He publishes regularly in Health Economics and Journal of Health Economics. He is president of the International Health Economic Association.

Prof Sir Michael Marmot
is currently the Director of the Institute of Health Equity and Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London. Sir Michael has led a research group on health inequalities for the past 40 years. He chairs the Department of Health Scientific Reference Group on tackling health inequalities. He was a member of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution for six years and is an honorary fellow of the British Academy.

Dr Abdirizak Ahmed Dalmar
He is an ophthalmologist, and holds a Ph.D from University College London. He works as visiting Senior Lecturer of Community Ophthalmology and Medical Statistics at Benadir University Medical College. He is co-founder and chairman of "first Somalia" focused on disaster resilience.

Dr Iman Nuwayhid
Physician and leading health economist. He is a Professor in the Johns Hopkins University, Department of Population, Family, and Reproductive Health. He publishes regularly in Health Economics and Journal of Health Economics. He is president of the International Health Economic Association.

Prof. Rajae El Aouad
is currently Director of Clinical Laboratory. She is Resident Member of the Hassan II Academy of Sciences and Technology (HIIAST) and a Member of the Steering Committee of the Royal Institute for Strategic Studies (IRES). She holds a Doctorate of Medical Studies, a Master of Sciences in Health & Social Development, a Master of Health Policy and Management.

Dr Stephen Gloyd
Family practice physician and long-time Professor of Global Health and Health Services at the University of Washington. Dr Gloyd is Executive Director of Health Alliance International, a no-profit organization that provides support to Ministries of Health in Mozambique, East Timor, Ivory Coast, and Sudan.

Professor Senait Fisseha
Reproductive endocrinologist, infertily specialist, and a global leader in expanding access to reproductive health services. She has published more than 50 scholarly articles and serves on the board of the Ethio-American Doctors Group.

Dr Prof. Bagher Larijani
Professor of Endocrinology at Tehran University of Medical Sciences. He is Deputy Minister of Medical Education, founding Director-General and Chief scientific officer of Endocrinology and Metabolism Research Institute, and Acting Director of Medical Ethics and History of Medicine Research Center.

Prof. K. Srinath Reddy
President of Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI). He works as Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology at Harvard (2014-2023). He is also an Adjunct Professor of the Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University and Honorary Professor of Medicine at the University of Sydney.

Dr Rowaida Al-Maaitah
Professor at the Department of Community and Mental Health Nursing at Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST). Dr Al-Maaitah has held numerous key positions including Senator in the Upper House of the Jordanian Parliament, Minister for Government Performance and Minister of Social Development.

Dr Salwa Najjab
Director of the Juzoor Foundation for Health & Social Development, a Palestinian NGO that works to promote health as a basic human right. Leading expert in the areas of Public Health, Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health, Health and Social Development, Women's Health Rights, Family Planning.

Dr Hoda Rashad
Professor and Director of the Social Research Center at The American University in Cairo. She is a resource person and consultant to a number of national and international organizations, including the WHO Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity.

Dr Assaad Hafeez
Executive Director of the Health Services Academy, a public health institution mandated by the Government of Pakistan. He is the Dean of Faculty of Medicine in Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, and Director General of Health in the Federal Ministry of Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Islamabad.

Prof. Rajae El Aouad
is currently Director of Clinical Laboratory. She is Resident Member of the Hassan II Academy of Sciences and Technology (HIIAST) and a Member of the Steering Committee of the Royal Institute for Strategic Studies (IRES). She holds a Doctorate of Medical Studies, a Master of Sciences in Health & Social Development, a Master of Health Policy and Management.

Dr Rowaida Al-Maaitah
Professor at the Department of Community and Mental Health Nursing at Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST). Dr Al-Maaitah has held numerous key positions including Senator in the Upper House of the Jordanian Parliament, Minister for Government Performance and Minister of Social Development.

Dr Salwa Najjab
Director of the Juzoor Foundation for Health & Social Development, a Palestinian NGO that works to promote health as a basic human right. Leading expert in the areas of Public Health, Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health, Health and Social Development, Women's Health Rights, Family Planning.

Dr Hoda Rashad
Professor and Director of the Social Research Center at The American University in Cairo. She is a resource person and consultant to a number of national and international organizations, including the WHO Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity.

Prof. Rajae El Aouad
is currently Director of Clinical Laboratory. She is Resident Member of the Hassan II Academy of Sciences and Technology (HIIAST) and a Member of the Steering Committee of the Royal Institute for Strategic Studies (IRES). She holds a Doctorate of Medical Studies, a Master of Sciences in Health & Social Development, a Master of Health Policy and Management.

Dr Assaad Hafeez
Executive Director of the Health Services Academy, a public health institution mandated by the Government of Pakistan. He is the Dean of Faculty of Medicine in Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, and Director General of Health in the Federal Ministry of Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Islamabad.

Dr Salwa Najjab
Director of the Juzoor Foundation for Health & Social Development, a Palestinian NGO that works to promote health as a basic human right. Leading expert in the areas of Public Health, Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health, Health and Social Development, Women's Health Rights, Family Planning.

Dr Hoda Rashad
Professor and Director of the Social Research Center at The American University in Cairo. She is a resource person and consultant to a number of national and international organizations, including the WHO Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity.

Prof. Rajae El Aouad
is currently Director of Clinical Laboratory. She is Resident Member of the Hassan II Academy of Sciences and Technology (HIIAST) and a Member of the Steering Committee of the Royal Institute for Strategic Studies (IRES). She holds a Doctorate of Medical Studies, a Master of Sciences in Health & Social Development, a Master of Health Policy and Management.


Terms of Reference
EMRO Commission on Social Determinants of Health

The Commission has been established by WHO/EMRO, in collaboration with Alliance of Health Policy and Systems Research and Institute of Health Inequity, to examine and report on social determinants and health inequalities and in the EMR Region. The Commission will make clear practical recommendations for action to reduce health inequalities and inequalities in the social determinants of health. The Commission will run between October 2019 and October 2020. The Commission will be comprised of a panel of 14 Commissioners, chaired by Professor Sir Michael Marmot. The Commissioners are experts in a range of relevant areas of expertise from the Region and also from other WHO regions.

COMMISSION PRODUCTS AND OUTPUTS

- Final report (September 2020)
- Three Commission meetings
- Development of regional networks on health equity

ROLE OF THE COMMISSIONERS

A panel of Commissioners, chaired by Professor Sir Michael Marmot (Institute of Health Equity, University College London) will set strategic direction and advise and support all facets of the Commission’s work. The Commission is comprised of experts from the Region and beyond, to ensure scientific rigour and appropriate contextualisation within the Eastern Mediterranean Region, while providing key support to the strategic, conceptual and analytic process, bringing expertise from a range of related areas. The Commission and its members are to work towards completing the following tasks:

1. Identify conceptual and strategic approaches of the Commission, most appropriate for the Region and taking into account key strategies from WHO and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
2. In collaboration with the IHE provide guidance and input into evidence reviews and analyses;
3. Develop and agree recommendations for action, based on the Commission analyses;
4. Engage in dialogue with policymakers to ensure that recommendations are contextually appropriate and of practical value;
5. Work with WHO/EMRO and national stakeholders to support uptake of Commission recommendations.

BACKGROUND

The Commission will be the first large scale exercise to research and create a knowledge repository on the current status of health inequalities in the Region and current actions undertaken by stakeholders to address health inequalities in the Member States. The Commission will provide a comprehensive analysis of health inequalities in the region and evidence on the drivers of these inequalities in EMR countries, including those in fragile and conflict situations. Based on the evidence and through consultative and collaborative process with stakeholders and member states the Commission will propose practical recommendations for countries and international organizations to address health inequalities and inequalities in the social determinants.

The recommendations from the Commission are expected to be aligned to existing frameworks and agendas for the Region. It is expected that the principles and approaches associated with the Social Determinants of Health, Rights-based Approach to Health, and Health in All Policies Agenda will play a significant role in the measures recommended. The recommendations of the Commission will provide a basis for the EMR to take action on all of the SDGs related to the social determinants of health.
The Commission is being organized by the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO) in conjunction with the Institute of Health Equity (IHE), based at University College London, and in collaboration with the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research. IHE will be responsible for carrying out the Commission, supported by inputs from a group of high-level commissioners with background in health, research and development from and outside EMR.

The Commission report will include an overview of health inequalities across the Region and of inequalities in key social determinants across the Region. The Commission will build on evidence from other regional commissions (EURO, PAHO) and the global Commission on Social Determinants of Health, but also identify and prioritise areas which are highly relevant to the EMR countries. These will be discussed and confirmed at the first Commissioner meeting, and potentially include:

- Political determinants of health
- Commercial determinants of health
- Drivers of violence and conflict
- Emergency settings
- Development and equity
- Migration, refugees and displaced populations
- Climate change
- Gender inequalities and gender culture
- Universal Health Systems
- Maternal and child health

An appropriate conceptual framework for understanding inequalities and for prioritising and developing proposals for action will be developed. The conceptual framework will support activity on SDGs and existing frameworks and plans across the Region. In the final Commission report, data on health inequalities and inequalities in social determinants of health will be presented. An assessment of governance systems will be provided and proposals made for development of more effective governance arrangements, including data systems and indicators appropriate for monitoring health equity. Throughout the Commission there will be a particular focus on development of specific, practical actions which can be undertaken to reduce inequalities. These will be appropriate for the differing contexts for countries across the Region and relevant for a range of stakeholders in the Region.