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11th Global Management Meeting at WHO headquarters, December 2022.







SENIOR MANAGERS FULLY ENGAGED WITH TRANSFORMATION THROUGH THE “100-DAY CHALLENGE”

In December 2022, the 11th Global Management Meeting (11GMM) took place at WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, after a four-year hiatus. The meeting involved WHO representatives, directors from headquarters and regional offices, regional directors and the Director-General, and took place under the overarching theme of “One WHO”.

A key outcome was the agreement to develop and implement a plan of action, detailing concrete steps for implementation of the meeting’s recommendations, to significantly strengthen WHO’s presence and impact in countries. To take forward the implementation of the recommendations, as advised by the Director-General, a three-level 11GMM Action for Results Group (ARG) has been established, which includes six WHO Representatives from all WHO regions. In January 2023, the six WHO Representatives were called to Geneva by the Director-General to begin the process of unpacking the recommendations for a duration of two weeks which was then extended to a full month. The ARG will meet regularly, either virtually or in person, at least until the end of 2023, of

which the first 100-days will require intense engagement, to monitor and support the implementation of the plan of action.

WHO REPRESENTATIVES IN THE ARG:

-  **Rabindra Romauld Abeyasinghe**, Malaysia
-  **Tatul Hakobyan**, Slovakia
-  **Elizabeth Hoff**, Libya
-  **Walter Kazadi Mulombo**, Nigeria
-  **Ana Treasure**, Nicaragua
-  **Jos Vandelaar**, Thailand

11TH GMM THEMATIC AREAS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

 FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO MATCH COUNTRY NEEDS	 MAINTAIN MINIMUM CORE CAPACITY IN COUNTRY OFFICES	 BOTTOM-UP PRIORITIZATION TO DELIVER FOR IMPACT
 IMPLEMENT ENHANCED DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY WITH ACCOUNTABILITY	 INCREASE WHO REPRESENTATIVES' ROLE IN GLOBAL AND REGIONAL DECISION MAKING	 ENHANCED VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION WORKING ACROSS SECTORS
 WORKING ACROSS SECTORS		

SCAN TO VIEW WEBSITE



WHO TRANSFORMATION

A REFLECTION ON THE 11TH GLOBAL MANAGEMENT MEETING

The WHO Representative to Libya, Ms Elizabeth Hoff, speaks about a few important elements of WHO transformation and shares her thoughts on the outcome of the 11th Global Management Meeting.

1 How would you describe the spirit of the 11th Global Management Meeting?

The overall spirit was positive. There is a sense that we may be getting somewhere after years of attempting to articulate what transformation actually means, which is the easiest part of the process. Change is difficult and complex, and sometimes people are obstacles to change. Managers and administrators have to learn to relinquish power and show greater trust in others. Sometimes, the obstacle is the system itself. For example, changes that appear relatively simple and straightforward often have unintended consequences for other rules and regulations. Sometimes, cost is a key impediment as well. We need to understand that the process of simplification is not necessarily simple, and people need to be willing to accept compromise and embrace change.

2 What were the key outcomes from the 11th Global Management Meeting?

We've heard before that countries must be at the centre of WHO's work. This is the most crucial message of all, as WHO's global policies are only as good as their implementation. Of course, country offices need the solid institutional framework that WHO headquarters and the Regional Office provide, but programme delivery happens on the ground. Important recommendations were made, all aimed at helping country offices put policies into practice, for the Organization to learn and evolve, and make sure it is making a difference in the lives of the people it serves. I was also pleased to see that WHO will review its delegation of authority to provide WHO Representatives with more responsibility and accountability, another crucial aspect.



WHO Representative to Libya Ms Elizabeth Hoff at the 11th Global Management Meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, December 2022.

3 What are your expectations of the Action for Results Group's implementation of the recommendations?

My expectations are very straightforward. I'm delighted that we have benchmarks that will allow WHO country office staff to monitor the recruitment process and identify areas for improvement. However, this is only the beginning. I hope we will see vigorous efforts to improve and report back to country offices. Better communication and a clear acknowledgement of where, how and why processes are failing or being delayed is needed. This is the only way we can ensure accountability. We need to see concrete improvements that will help country offices implement operations on the ground. However, this is a two-way process: country offices are responsible for complying with benchmarks and processes, and the Regional Office should let them know if they are falling short.

4 What are your views on the 11th Global Management Meeting being referred to by some as "déjà vu"?

In meeting after meeting, we've discussed the same issues, but have seen few results. Meaningful transformation is an iterative process and takes time, especially in an organization as complex as WHO. I'm acutely conscious that people are looking to us as senior managers to lead and implement change. I am also more optimistic that transformation will happen. Change comes from the top, and the Director-General has expressed his firm commitment in placing country offices at the centre of our work.

AN OUTSIDE VIEW

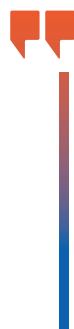
PROGRESS IN MEMBER STATE ENGAGEMENT, WITH ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Saidi, former Minister of Health in Oman and former President of the World Health Assembly

To start with, I was honoured and privileged to serve as a health minister for my country Oman for over 12 years. During this period, I was faced with many challenges, like all health care staff, officials and organizations, not the least of which was the COVID-19 pandemic.

The changes, reforms and progress made by WHO, particularly in our Region, were very helpful in managing the difficult situations and challenges. I strongly believe that WHO has become more responsive to each country's needs, and the involvement with stakeholders has become more apparent and effective.

As is well known to all of us, the Eastern Mediterranean Region is one of the most difficult of all WHO regions, if not the most difficult. The challenges are huge and complex, with both man-made and natural disasters. The resources allocated are used to manage the many ongoing emergencies, which means there's very little left to improve other health care programmes, such as the preventative ones.



Nevertheless, significant progress has been made to improve the health of the Region, thanks to the dedication, commitment and hard work of WHO staff in the Region

I believe that the Region should be provided with more resources to improve its preparedness for other major challenges. In addition to emergencies, preparedness for the effect of climate change on health, the obesity pandemic in the Region, antimicrobial resistance, the growing burden of noncommunicable diseases and potential future pandemics can be improved through increased surveillance.

As mentioned, WHO's engagement with Member States has improved significantly, but there is definitely scope for further improvement, including providing the right information at the right time to enable us to make better-informed decisions, particularly during emergency situations.



Former Minister of Health of Oman, Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Saidi.



SETTING THE STAGE FOR PRSEAH

As consciousness of the issue of sexual misconduct has risen across WHO, Director of PRSEAH, Gaya Gamhewage, describes the key components that enable this form of misconduct and how the Organization is addressing it.

Dr Gamhewage points to a lingering fear of reporting due to a perceived lack of consequences for misconduct, a lack of policy clarity and an exploitation of power dynamics as the primary enablers that pave the way for sexual misconduct in the workplace. As a result, many victims and survivors of it feel it is futile to report it or are afraid to do so for fear of retaliation.

In order to establish and maintain a culture of courage, Dr Gamhewage stresses the need to first cement a system that backs up the victim and survivors and empowers them, lest they are re-victimized.

“ People can only be brave if the system backs them up ”

The responsibility for creating the appropriate blueprint for safeguarding measures against sexual misconduct, and to equip staff with the necessary skills for speaking up, lies with the Organization.



PRSEAH Regional Meeting in Cairo, Egypt, November 2022.

Aside from the compliance requirement for reporting sexual misconduct, Dr Gamhewage emphasizes the need for a whole-of-organization approach that digs deeper, into layers beyond technical knowledge.

This includes focusing attention on conduct and behaviour, adopting a risk-based approach to the reality that sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment can potentially take place in any setting within the boundaries of WHO’s work, and internalizing WHO values.

Furthermore, safe channels of reporting, scaling up action to assist victims and implementing

investigative and disciplinary action, are all factors that will collectively ensure a circle of trust within the Organization.

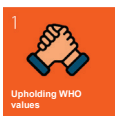
As an Organization focused on efficiency and results, Dr Gamhewage suggests that additional attention should be paid to behaviour, and that organizational values must be reiterated amongst individuals and teams, referencing the ongoing transformation efforts in this regard. This includes understanding the default positions that can enable harmful behaviour.

Additionally, establishing a focal point network for respectful workplace initiatives in the Region will serve as a core foundation to ensure that the “muscle of good behaviour is grown and to care for others in how we work”.

“ We practice good behaviour not by intellect, but by being good ”



Dr Gaya Gamhewage, Director of PRSEAH at WHO headquarters



EMBEDDING PRSEAH MEASURES IN AFGHANISTAN

As a grade 3 emergency country, preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PRSEAH) in Afghanistan is paramount across all areas of WHO’s work in Afghanistan to be able to effectively deliver on the ground. Respectful workplace focal point and National Professional Officer in the country, Sharifullah Haqmal, speaks on the importance of prioritizing PRSEAH within this context.



Workshop with Sehatmandi PRSEAH focal points from 8 NGOs.

He highlights that identifying focal points for local nongovernmental organizations and providing them with training, can bring WHO’s partners up to speed, empowering them to serve as active “upstanders”, and adds that PRSEAH is now embedded within the contracts of WHO’s implementing partners.

Additionally, all staff and non-staff receive training on the proper reporting channels for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. He thinks that attention should now be shifted towards helping WHO’s partners to better prevent and identify the sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment of beneficiaries in its various forms.

However, implementing a zero-tolerance policy is challenged by the fear of reporting and retaliation, as well as the length of time it can take for an investigation to be completed. These concerns are also relevant outside WHO, due to the changing power dynamics in the country.



Sharifullah Haqmal,
National Professional Officer at the WHO Afghanistan country office

To safeguard the measures for PRSEAH, he feels that multiple forms of action are essential. Each individual within the Organization should actively play their part through using training, webinars and other available resources to broaden their knowledge, and that “disciplinary action should always result after an investigation is completed”.

“An emphasis should be made on behavioural red flags to counter sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment”

For PRSEAH to be fully implemented at the country level and lead to tangible changes, he identifies some key factors. These include concerted efforts by the leadership, equipping focal points with greater knowledge on the matter and having a predictable budget for PRSEAH activities. Additionally, he says that having international and national staff serve as focal points would make work on PRSEAH more effective.



Dr Luo Dapeng
WHO Representative in Afghanistan

Dr Luo Dapeng, WHO Representative in Afghanistan, notes that great progress has been made to ensure PRSEAH is embedded within WHO’s programmes and in work with its partners.

“This was done through empowerment of staff and heightened engagement by everyone. Our context in Afghanistan poses some challenges, but we remain committed to sustaining the progress we have made so far.”



DELIVERING FOR IMPACT IN BAHRAIN

The “100-day challenge” was established to drive measurable impact in countries in a short period of time by encouraging the systematic and consistent use of data in the prioritization of WHO’s work. To realize this vision, nine country offices were selected from the different WHO regions to pilot the challenge, with Bahrain and the Islamic Republic of Iran as the two countries from our Region.



The Bahraini Farmers Market is a national initiative that offers fresh homegrown and local produce.

Here, the WHO Representative to Bahrain, Dr Tasnim Atatrah, speaks to us about converting priorities into tangible results through the “100-day challenge”.

“The 100-day challenge has amplified engagement across all levels of the Organization”

Guided by recommendations from WHO headquarters and the Regional Office, Bahrain conducted a review of noncommunicable diseases, and determined that addressing obesity should be one of its national priorities. Bahrain is one of the first countries in the Region to pilot a WHO acceleration plan to reduce obesity, in alignment with the national priorities, identified in the WHO and Ministry of Health joint workplan, and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 on good health and well-being. The next step includes holding a workshop on addressing obesity, with a focus on the Gulf context.

A second national priority is moving towards sustainable cities and communities through the healthy universities programme. There has been intensive progress on this. Through multisectoral action by schools, universities and health providers, led by the Ministry of Health, healthy dietary guidelines are being implemented.

Moreover, the Ministry of Health, with support from WHO, is producing communication products for health facilities on implementing dietary guidelines. In addition, assessments are being carried out in five universities as part of the healthy universities programme.



Dr Buthaina Ajlan (left), Chief of the Nutrition Section of the Bahraini Ministry of Health, Dr Tasnim Atatrah (middle), WHO Representative in Bahrain and Mrs Fatima Ahmed Isa (right), Head of the Standards Development, Testing and Metrology Directorate at the Ministry of Industry and Commerce in Bahrain.

“Health goes beyond health facilities”, says Dr Atatrah, adding that outreach in universities will result in progress on additional SDG targets, such as youth and women’s empowerment and quality education.

Dr Atatrah highlights the key factors that assist implementation on the ground, including the availability of evidence-based data, committed leadership and multisectoral action. Through the 100-day challenge, she hopes the country will serve as a model both regionally and globally.

She points out that building trust and uniting stakeholders to integrate health in all policies can be a lengthy process.

“This initiative can show the comparative advantage of having a country office on the ground”

The Bahraini government has managed to implement outstanding initiatives towards its health-related goals, and the successful accelerated implementation of the 2022–2023 Programme Budget workplan in Bahrain can be used as a model for the country in the planning of the 2024–2025 Programme Budget.



THE MANY FACES OF INCLUSIVITY

As part of WHO's ongoing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives for a respectful workplace, Riffat Zahoor Abbasi, Pakistan country office receptionist and member of the Regional Office's DEI regional catalyst group, speaks about the importance of tolerance, acceptance and empathy.

Incorporating these three factors in our day-to-day work comes in many forms. As an international organization containing diverse personalities hailing from different backgrounds, Ms Abbasi thinks that an "empathy lens" should be put on prior to dealing with others during the day ahead.

She adds that by looking inwards and practicing acceptance, tolerance and forgiveness towards others, a sense of peace will result in the workplace, as opposed to the feelings of anxiety or even depression that can arise when colleagues feel excluded.



*Riffat Abbasi,
Receptionist/Telephone
Operator at the WHO
Pakistan country office.*

As staff shape and mold the workplace culture, she points to the importance of listening to suggestions from colleagues at all levels. "If these suggestions and voices are unheard, something constructive can easily be dismissed," she says. Feelings of resentment may build up and be misplaced towards others, whilst good relationships with others increases trust and work productivity.

She also emphasizes the importance of including all colleagues in social activities, such as having lunch together, to build a sense of connectedness. "Unconscious biases make people feel lonely, excluded, and affect work productivity" she says, adding that newcomers need to be welcomed and have their presence acknowledged, including through organized orientations.

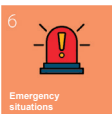
At an organizational level, she feels that training can be provided on the harmful effects of exclusionary behaviours and practices on the work at hand. On an individual level, making others feel comfortable and establishing a safe and secure zone no matter how small it may seem, can help in creating change.



People will forget what you said and did, but not how you made them feel"



When we are healthy and feel good, we are also good for our family and others"



NEWS IN BRIEF: THREE-LEVEL WORKSHOP ON SOPS IN EMERGENCIES

In November 2022, the WHO Health Emergencies Programme held a two-day workshop at the Regional Office to streamline the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for human resources in emergencies. The workshop took place in response to the urgent need to ensure WHO's agility in adapting to rapidly evolving emergency contexts, and in recognition that a bottom-up approach is key to identifying the challenges on the ground.

As a three-level collaboration, participants included WHO staff from the regional and headquarters Health

Emergencies Programmes, the Business Operations Support division at the Regional Office, the Human Resources and Talent Management teams at headquarters and the Regional Office for Africa, and the country offices in Afghanistan, Iran (the Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Libya, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

Participants compiled recommendations to enhance WHO's response during emergency situations in the Region, in line with the priorities laid out in the regional transformation roadmap and with the approved Emergency Response Framework, e-manual and delegation of authority.



WHO headquarters, Regional Office for Africa, Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and country office staff attended the emergency SOPs workshop in Cairo, Egypt, in November 2022.



2022 AWARDS PROGRAMME FOR EXCELLENCE

In keeping with the theme of 2022 as the “Year of the WHO workforce”, the annual Awards for Excellence acknowledge individual and team efforts for their exceptional dedication. Reflecting on the themes of collaboration and teamwork, some of the recipients share with us their thoughts on the factors that drive excellence.



INDIVIDUAL AWARDS



Naser Hussain,
Fleet Manager, WHO Pakistan country office – Director-General’s award

To be an effective team leader, start with yourself. I try to empower team members and make sure they are heard. Respect them, never shout or treat them aggressively and address conflicts in a collective manner. Ensure equal opportunities and a work-life balance and mentor the team. Let people be free to take leave in an organized manner in order not to affect operations, and divide tasks accordingly to avoid conflict.

The result? A harmonious and collaborative team.



Sami Abdullallah Radman,
Assistant WHO Representative, WHO Yemen country office – Regional Director’s award

Teamwork is the secret formula for success. Add to this passion and devotion to your work, friendly and professional relationships, coordination and communication. Be there for your colleagues, it makes a difference. Most of our disputes and disagreements are resolved internally as we directly address issues promptly.



TEAM AWARDS



Victoria Bélorgeot,
Coordination and Documentation Cell, WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, Incident Management Support Team (IMST) for COVID-19 – a member of the regional COVID-19 IMST that received the Regional Director’s award

My experience with IMST was unique in scope as this was a pandemic. With over 100 members, it required consistent cross-departmental cooperation and coordination at all levels, and senior management ensured we were strategically aligned. Expertise and leadership experience were essential, and the team cared about their work. Lessons learnt from this experience should be applied to improve our response in future emergencies and support country offices.



Lora Alsawalha,
National Professional Officer, WHO Jordan country office – a member of the regional COVID-19 IMST that received the Regional Director’s award

My IMST experience has better equipped me for future pandemics. Without passion, dedication and a positive team spirit, my work as a technical focal point for COVID-19 in Jordan would be incomplete. We work as a WHO team. The IMST team provided me with technical support and guidance and I delivered them at the country level. Trust in WHO by the government has increased due to more collaboration.



Mohd Mashal,
Medical Officer, WHO Sudan country office – a member of the Sudan country office that received the Director-General’s award

The success of our team comes from the WHO Representative’s commitment to allocating time towards our needs and keeping an open-door policy. He created a team. Our sub-offices have been linked and we have many capacity-building workshops and have a culture of joint planning and reporting for efficiency. We develop as a team and understand our objectives. When facing challenges or disagreements, we explain the benefits and objectives. Most of all, we remain open to change.