



# Bulletin

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION – IRAQ OFFICE

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Children in middle city of Baghdad washing their hands – WHO 2010

### WHO- Iraq Bulletin

This quarterly bulletin presents important news, events, publications and announcements from various programmes of the World Health Organization (WHO) – Iraq Office.

## Evaluation of Iraq National Malaria Elimination programme.

Amman, Jordan, 6-10 June 2010

A training workshop was conducted by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with WHO, on (6 – 10) June 2010 in Amman–Jordan for five days to evaluate Malaria Elimination National program in Iraq.

12 health workers representing Communicable Diseases Center in Baghdad, Directorates of Health and National Academic Institutions have been introduced to Malaria Elimination Assessment Tools and the importance of conducting field assessment visits and submitting assessment reports on regular basis.

The workshop was a great platform, where the participants had a chance to review the management of the programme's activities including surveillance system, agreed on list of recommendations, such as visit the insecticide storage facility and Public health lab at governorate level, select two districts from each governorate and organize a visit to two public health facility

(Primary Health Care unit, Primary Health Care center), one public laboratory, two private lab, one district hospital, one private clinic, and 1-2 sentinel sites for entomology in each selected district.

This workshop considered as a fundamental step toward developing a strategy to maintain Malaria elimination in Iraq, which is planned to be built on desk review data and study field visits to the selected areas.



## Preliminary preparation of Sanitary Inspection Survey

Iraq, June 2010

WHO supported the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Municipalities, COSIT and Kurdistan Region Government in developing questionnaire to be used during the sanitary inspection survey which aimed to target 1286 drinking water resources in Anbar, Thi-Qar and Suliemaniyya governorates.

On the other hand, an environmental awareness plane has been prepared to be implanted in the three governorates during the same period.

Worth to mention that this survey is part of WHO, UNICEF, UNHABITAT, UNDP Joint project on water and sanitation (WATSAN) Master plan.

## Pilot Assessment of Congenital Birth Defects in Iraq in Six Governorates

Amman, Jordan, 27 June 2010

The Iraqi Ministry of Health in close collaboration with the World Health Organization, commenced a project in July to assess incidence of potential congenital birth defects (CBD) in six districts in five governorates in Iraq, Suleimanyia, Diyala, Anbar (Fallujah and other districts to be chosen), Baghdad, Thi-Qar, and Basra. The project was called the "Pilot Assessment of Congenital Birth Defects in Iraq in Six Governorates."

The assessment included a descriptive study to disclose the magnitude, distribution and trends of CBD and associated risk factor in Iraq including Fallujah district compared to 5 similar-sized areas in Iraq.

The project is expected to last 18 months and aims to provide initial baseline information necessary for the establishment of a national prevention programme that would be used to guide interventions by the national programme on improving maternal and child health. It would also enable timely and

efficient access to experts in the area of congenital birth defects. Such baseline information does not currently exist in some locations, which impacts on the manner of which health authorities can undertake health interventions.

The project will draw data from selected locations in Iraq representing different geographical areas and personal characteristics, analyse spatial and temporal trends, assess the magnitude of time trends and detect possible changes in incidence. It is imperative to note that studying congenital birth defects is a multifaceted complex undertaking that requires intensive resources including supporting laboratories for environmental and genetics assessment.

The project will also build national capacities within the Central Baghdad Laboratory and among laboratory technicians.

Recently, a consultation meeting was held by the Ministry of Health to plan the project's next steps. The project is being led by a "high policy group" composed of members of various ministries and chaired by the undersecretary of the Ministry of Health. Linked to it is a technical committee composed of researchers and scientist that will be conducting the evidence-based research for the project in close collaboration with World Health Organization.

In August, two Video- Audio conference have been conducted with the presence of the congenital Birth Defect project high committee's members, consultants form WHO (EMRO, HQ and Country offices)

During the meeting the participants have reviewed the proposed plan and agreed to conduct a consultation meeting end of September to discuss the project's protocol, the suggested methodology and other action points to study CBD in the selected six areas in Iraq.

### WHO met with Directorate health System (DHS)/EMRO concerning the ongoing projects on Health system programme

Cairo, June 2010

A three-day visit from the WHO country office (WCO) team was organized to the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) to brief EMRO/DHS and other relevant units on WHO operations in Iraq focusing on programs related to health system, solicit and identify areas requiring EMRO technical assistance to enhance the implementation of the ongoing Health System Projects in Iraq, enhance coordination, integration and complementarity of the Health System Projects in Iraq and discuss and agree on practical mechanisms to expedite the implementation of different HSS projects in Iraq. During the visit, a meeting was held with the division of Health Systems and Services Development (DHS) including a detailed presentation of WHO Operations/programs by Iraq team followed by plenary discussions, also meetings were held with different units (a) Health Systems Development units: HCD, HMS, HEC, PHP, EST), (b) Health Technology units (LAB, HMD, EMP, VAC), (c) Human Resource Development units (HRD, FEL, NUR), (d) Emergency and Humanitarian Action (EHA) (e) and meetings with DRD, ARD and PME as well as side visits to DHP/Food Safety Programme, Personnel and DAF/LSP took place.

### WHO met with Health Policies and Planning (HPP) Unit concerning the ongoing projects on Primary Health Care and I-PSM programme

Cairo, June 2010

WHO Iraq Country Office (WCO) briefed the Regional Office/HPP team on the policy and capacity building needs in Iraq, especially for the ongoing projects on PHC and I-PSM programme. On one hand, actions were taken into consideration to support the health policy and planning process, such as the HPP to provide technical support to initiate a national health development policy process aiming at drafting a unified national health policy, and to initiate a parallel process to revise the existing health strategy of Iraq by April 2011. On the other hand, other actions were taken to support the I-PSM Programme, such as to link the Health System Performance Assessment and functional review to the national health policy development process, conduct regular consultations between WRO and HPP to support the functional review process of the health sector that will be conducted as part of the I-PSM, and for HPP to facilitate the organization of training course on health system management as part of the I-PSM project and in partnership with the Imperial College in London.



### Enhancing the occupational health in 15 governorates

Baghdad, 15-17 June 2010

WHO, through the Joint Programme Review Mission (JPRM) supported the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in implementing two workshops on Occupational Health. The main objective of the workshops was to enhance the technical capacity of 35 inspectors in 15 governorates on how to assess the environmental status at work place.

## Two workshops on monitoring and controlling of pollution

Iraq, July 2010

WHO through JPRM supported Ministry of Environment in implementing two workshops, one on Air pollution control and other on chemical safety to enhance the technical capacity of 25 technical workers in the Ministry of Environment staff in pollution monitoring and controlling.

## Pre-testing the regional training materials on “Caring for the sick child in the community”

Cairo, El Fayoum, 3-8 July 2010

WHO Iraq participated in the Regional meeting to draft and pre-test the Regional training materials of “Caring for the sick children in the community” for health workers. The meeting was attended by core Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) coordinators, master facilitators from ministries of health and other related ministries from 5 countries, Egypt, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Sudan and Morocco , along with UNICEF.

## WHO purchased portable water quality equipments for Suleimaneyya Directorate of Environment.

Suleimaniya, July 2010

In coordination with the Ministry of Environment, WHO finalized the process of purchasing portable equipments to be used by Suleimaniya Directorate of Environment for water quality analysis.

## WHO purchased four vehicles to assist in monitoring water quality.

Suleimaniya, July 2010

Four vehicles will be used to transport water samples from the field, particularly in Suleimaniyya to the water quality control centres.

## Expand Immunization Programmes in Iraq

Cairo, July 2010

WHO and UNICEF supported the participation of managers from MoH - Iraq in the Inter-country Immunization managers meeting in Cairo, the main objective of the meeting was to focused on the district immunization strategy and the increase the coverage rate of 42 health districts in Iraq

## A visit to Baghdad to strategic directions related to the reform in the health sector

Baghdad, July 2010

WHO team visited Baghdad and held technical consultations meetings with various Ministry Of Health departments to discuss strategic directions related to the reform in the health sector and the support which can be provided through the implementation of the Iraq-Public Sector Modernization (I-PSM). Other programs discussed included the current status of emergency medical services (EMS) and ongoing efforts to strengthen its capacity to respond to mass casualty incidents, the global program on Good Governance of Medicines (GGM) as well as the situation related to laboratory diagnosis capacity in hospitals and in public health laboratories in Baghdad and in the governorates.



## A training course on chemical analysis for water samples

Suleimaniya, July 2010

A three days training course on chemical analysis for water samples conducted on July 2010 in Suleimaniya for 12 laboratory technicians in the Directorate of Environment & Directorate of Water and Sanitation. The main objective of the training was to enhance the chemical water quality analysis techniques.



## First Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) to be launched in Iraq

Amman, August 19, 2010

As part of the preparation of the launch of the first time ever Computerised Maintenance Management System (CMMS) WHO supported the training of twelve biomedical engineers, technicians and IT staff from the three Departments of Health of Erbil, Muthana and Medical City/Baghdad.

The five day training which was completed on 19 August 2010 in Amman focussed on the CMMS Model Asset Plus from GE Health Care, newly acquired to support the Biomedical Maintenance Workshops which are being established in the three mentioned DoHs. This activity is part of the implementation of the UNDG ITF funded programme to improve the management and safe use of medical equipment in Iraq. The training was facilitated by an expert from the supplier of the CMMS as part of the training package embedded in the contract for the provision of the system to the Biomedical Maintenance Workshops within health institutions in Iraq.

Additional training and orientation sessions will be conducted on-site upon the installation and set-up of the system, which is to be carried out within the coming 2 weeks in the three different sites. The CMMS is a modular system which will assist in managing all aspects of biomedical equipment-based assets found in the healthcare institutions and will serve as a tool for management, reporting, monitoring and compilation of statistics on existing hospitals' medical equipment status, maintenance work orders, preventive maintenance and staff performance.

WHO and UNICEF supported MoH/NRI to conduct a training course for 30 doctors working at Primary Health Care centers (PHC) in Baghdad on the [new WHO growth charts to assess the growth of children under 5](#).

WHO supported MoH/MCH unit to conduct training course for 24 doctors working at PHC centers in Baghdad [on adolescent health](#).

## Annual meeting, for Iraq national Expanded Programme on Immunization managers and Communicable Disease Centre heads.

15-22 August 2010 in Istanbul -Turkey

The Iraq Ministry of Health, in collaboration with WHO and UNICEF hold a meeting for 90 managers of the national expanded programme of immunization at the central and governorate levels and the Communicable Diseases Center along with experts from WHO (EMRO and HQ) during the period 15-22 August 2010 in Istanbul - Turkey

The main objective of the meeting was review and strengthening routine immunization systems, provide EPI managers with a clear framework for conducting their day to day managerial activities and resolving problems that arise in the implementation of their national EPI plans moreover agree on mechanism and protocol to expand the programme

## Costing the Basic Health Service Package:

September 2010

The Ministry Of Health in collaboration of WHO has been completed the process of costing the Basic Health Service Package (BHSP) September 2010 and the final report will be issued by end of September 2010.

This sets of information on costs will assist the government of Iraq in evidence based planning and budgeting.

Worth to mentioned that, Basic Health Service Package (BHSP) was developed by Ministry of Health of Iraq with the technical and financial assistance of WHO and was approved by the MOH in the month of February 2010 at a grand ceremony held in Baghdad. The BHSP will form the foundation of a health system care system in Iraq and include the services that would form the core of services delivery in all primary health care facilities. BHSP will bring coherence and unify the priority of the Iraq health care system. It will provide policy makers of the Iraq health care system with unambiguous road map and clear sense of direction. It will standardize the classification of health facilities and improve access of the population to PHC services.

## AL Hasnawi in a visit to WHO –Iraq office to follow up the progress of the National TB programme in Iraq.

September 2010

Amman-- The Iraq Minister of Health H.E Dr Salih AL Hasnawi held a bilateral meeting with the representative of World Health Organization – Iraq office a.i Dr Said Arnaout and with the presence of Dr Wasan AL Alwan head of the Health Attaché at the embassy of Iraq in Jordan and Tuberculosis programme (TB) international technical team on 7 September 2010 at WHO – Iraq Office in Amman to discuss the progress of the National TB Control Program in last recent years and agree on the best mechanism to utilize the recently approved consolidated Round 6 and 9 of TB grant from the Global Fund, that is around US\$ 28 million for the coming 5 years.

Considerable discussions were made on how to strengthen the diagnostic capacities of TB laboratories for sputum smear microscopy as well as for culture and the drug-susceptibility testing (DST) for multidrug-resistant (MDR-TB), build the capacity of the health personnel working in the area of TB control, and reinforce the implementation of DOTS in prisons as part of the “Prisons’ Health” project. They have also agreed on innovating new approaches to reach high risk population groups in marshland population, IDPs, TB contacts etc.

## National Health Accounts survey first phase completed waiting the report to be published.

September 2010

National Health Account survey was successfully completed on September 2010, the Ministry of Health with the full support WHO is in the process of data entering that will be followed by analysis based on international principles and methods. The preliminary Report on National Health Accounts for Iraq is expected to be published by the end of November 2010.

The work started in October 2009 by conducting many capacity building activities for MoH officials at the central and the governorates level in the 18 governorates. This was preceded by developing NHA survey tools.

NHA is a tool designed to assist policy-makers in their efforts to understand their health systems and to improve health system performance, the survey covered the different contributors to the health sector financing in Iraq such as the private sector, NGOs, International Community, Health Insurance and the employers

NHA constitute a systematic, comprehensive and consistent monitoring of resource flows in a country's health system for a given period and reflect the main functions of health care financing: resource mobilization & allocation, pooling and insurance, purchasing of care and the distribution of benefits Hence, since October 2009 WHO is thoroughly supporting the ministry in the health care financing, through the National Health Accounts exercise, where it will be the first time for Iraq producing the National Health Accounts Report.

**The Humanitarian Day** was proclaimed by the General Assembly two years ago to commemorate the 2003 Canal Hotel bombing in Baghdad, Iraq, which claimed the lives of 22 UN staff members and injured more than 150 others, among which two dearest senior colleagues were survived.

### Victims of security incidents

This year exactly after the elections, one of the best dedicated WHO worker, Mrs Raqiya lost her life along with her son in car bombing event targeted residential area, the explosion happened while she was presuming her work from home thinking that she is protecting herself from unpredictable, unexpected surrounded suicide events.

Raqiya has joint proudly others heroes from WHO staff and humanitarian aid workers who have devoted their life to serve their families, community and firstly their country.

## Voices from the field



**Dr Yusra 45**, who works for the Ministry of Health in Baghdad since 1987 said “ **The mere act of going to work and returning home is my everyday life-threatening experience.**” she added. “Witnessing immediate aftermath catastrophes in an area lack minimum standard of services is the hardest thing any doctor, mother or human can stand.

Facing children dying, parents expected you to have a magic wand to return children back is one of the toughest moment Dr. Yusra have ever experienced. She is still recalling Al-Dora primary school’s bombing, and how she was part of the team who rescued hundred of children lives.

Dr . Yusra recalled also seeing a bomb detonate in front of her house while she was on her way to visit a *Acute Flaccid Paralysis* patient. “Seeing my house’s windows broken, my belongings vanishing, didn’t stop me to help people didn’t stop me to continue my mission”

In spite of the dangers and risks surrounding her work, the threat of being a doctor aligned with her family’s extreme objection. hitherto, dr. Yusra committed herself to help those in need and said “ **I love my job, It fulfills my dream and believes to help change in Iraq**”

**Despite dangers, health workers dedicated to help people in need in Iraq.**

**Dr Awatif 39**, who works for WHO in southern part of Iraq- Marchland area (one of the most vulnerable area in Iraq), serving in the front-line of communication with community, identifying and collecting health and environmental problems, listening to people needs, providing a valuable resource and support, said:” It is very important for any health aid worker to have a reason to do work, especially in difficult security environment, mine is **the fear of not being able to assist people in real need**”.

Dealing with the security restrictions and working face-to-face with the realities of human suffering are the most difficult part of my job. However, **helping people and creating a network of friends are the heal of my soreness.**

It is a real challenge, I can’t forget the car bombs detonate in front of eyes in Missan and Thiqr however I can’t forget too, the merriness I have seen in people eyes when I reached their rural vulnerable areas offering WHO supports.



**Dr Salwa**, 55, braves insecurity to deliver urgently-needed vaccine to children uprooted by conflict in Diala governorate, she reached families and their children when access was curtailed by the presence of armed groups, tribal and checkpoints.

Dr Salwa said that her job requires her to be on the field frequently, therefore **she used to take different path to work every day and sometime she has forced to conceal her identity of being a doctor to protect her live and others as well.**

Dr Salwa recalled a story happened in Sayed Awad village ( A high risk villages in Diyala governorate ) . and said “ no one has the guts to enter this area during the period of 2005-2007, it was a symbol of extreme violence, conflict, complete destruction , people dying, kidnapping and no accountability for human rights violations” Added , **I’m proud I had a chance to be part of the team who returned live to this area, touched to see orphans happy to receive their minimum rights of having pen to write or book to read.**

**Dr Muataz**, one of countless MoH workers who has been targeted and under threats for years. He is the father of immunization in Iraq, pledged himself to reach every child no matter where he/she lives and regardless the security situation or circumstances.

During years of experience, Dr Muataz learned that, there's no reason to fear failure if you're willing to do. **Dr Muataz has a hundred of stories to tell summarizing part of the hard time he went through**, starting from driving by exploded oil well, cutting rivers every day, dealing with groups and military troop’s and witnessing series of tragic events.

He said,“ hope” born when there was no hope” ... by this how Dr Muataz started telling a story happened in 2007 during the second round of house to house polio national immunization campaign when one of the immunization mobile team visited a very high risk area called Al-dora in south Baghdad. Dr Muataz said, in the midst of the unbelievable misery and suffering ,the last thing anybody can expected happened, an old women screams calling for help to rescue her pregnant daughter who was close to delivery , at first we were concerned of how we can move inside a serious battle between the government and al Qaeda, how we can convince the driver to move the vehicle inside the area, then the team fearlessly decided to confront the danger and help her reach the hospital.

New baby girl born, her name is Hope and she came to prove that everyone has the rights to live .

“still can see hope” Dr Muataz confirmed ... although my contribution may be small one **but i succeeded in drawing a smile of hundreds of children and take part in protecting the health of Iraq new generation.**

