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Oman

15. Ending violence against children through health systems strengthening and multisectoral approaches

Document No. EB152/21

Mr. Dr Kerstin Vesna Petric Cahir of the executive board

Honorable EB members

Ladies and gentlemen

We note the report EB 152/21 Produced by the director general on ending violence against children and welcome the comprehensive approach adopted by the WHO through the INSPIRE Strategy.

The Sultanate of Oman is committed to ending violence against children, and has developed a national multi-sectorial framework to prevent and end violence against children which is in line with the INSPIRE strategies.

To ensure having specific legislation to children a Child Law which was issued by a Royal Decree in 2014 with articles specific to protection from abuse, violence and exploitation as well as the right to be treated in a generous and humanitarian way. The Law mandates care givers by the nature of their profession to report suspected cases of child abuse or any violation of child rights.

To enforce implementation of the law, a Multisectoral Child Protection Committees were formed in all governorates to protect children from violence, exploitation and abuse. The committee receive reports of child abuse, take actions to protect victims and act as a coordinating body between different sectors. The National Committee of Family Affairs is a



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high-level national multisectoral committee responsible to oversee the issues related to child abuse. A free 24/7 child protection hotline was launched to receive incidents of child abuse.

Activities related to child abuse and child protection are included in the current five-year plan (2021-2025) for Ministry of Health, which includes strengthen reporting systems, capacity building, community awareness, positive parenting and strengthening collaboration with other sectors. To standardize medical services and care packages national “Clinical Guidelines for Child Abuse and Neglect” were also developed. A national “Cross Sectoral Strategy for Coordination, Collaboration and Referral of Child Protection, Children” was developed. This was followed by the “Oman National Behaviour Change Communication Strategy and Action Plan”. Child protection is a major component in the strategy, which aims to create a behavioural change that will protect children through promoting positive parenting.

In terms of data Oman has a national data-base for reporting suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. The database gathers cases reported by the community, schools, children themselves and health care workers. To facilitate the follow up of cases within the different levels of the health system, the system is inaugurated within the electronic medical record system. Cases needing admission or those needing medical interventions are reviewed within the health system by the Regional Hospital Task Force for Child maltreatment.

To ensure the continuum of training and capacity building modules on training of child maltreatment were introduced in the pre and post training curriculum of medical students, doctors, dentists and nurses. Recently a training course on “investigative interviewing” on child sexual abuse was recently launched.

Despite all achievements, there are still challenges facing the child protection in Oman including addressing some social norms, coordination and collaboration with other sectors in managing cases, non-availability of a national electronic system for reporting and managing cases of child abuse and neglect, screening for child abuse and neglect at primary health care and the lack of evidence based parenting programs. However, efforts are still on-going to overcome these challenges.



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The WHO can support member states by engaging effectively and developing country specific strategies to tackle country specific challenges be it capacity building, enhancing governance or improving parenting practices.

Thanks Mr./Mrs. Chair