



In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Message from

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to the

**TRAINING WORKSHOP TO DEVELOP NUTRITION SURVEILLANCE
CAPABILITIES AND IMPROVE MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF
NUTRITION PROGRAMMES**

Alexandria, Egypt, 7–15 March 2004

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to this training workshop to develop the nutrition surveillance capabilities of Member States and to improve the monitoring and evaluation capacities of nutrition programmes. The World Health Organization Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean has organized this workshop in collaboration with the Centres for Diseases Control and Prevention, Atlanta, USA, the High Institute of Public Health, Alexandria University, Egypt, and the Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, USA. At the outset, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to all involved for their sincere collaboration.

I am particularly happy to note that our collaboration with the University of Alexandria, and particularly the High Institute of Public Health, continues to flourish even after so many years. I take this opportunity to thank the Dean, Professor Dr Hassan Bassiouny, for kindly hosting this workshop. I am also grateful to the Department of Nutrition of the High Institute of Public Health for its active involvement in the training workshop.

Our collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, USA, has now entered the fourth year. These years of collaboration have mutually been very productive, yielding a number of strong training programmes and technical consultations that have considerably advanced the national capacities of Member States in the epidemiological assessment and control of micronutrient deficiencies. I look forward to our continued collaboration through the coming years. It is also my pleasure to welcome colleagues from the Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, Atlanta, whose contribution to the development of this training programme has been immense. To the national participants from our Member States, I extend a warm welcome and trust that your stay here will be useful and productive.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The existence of iron deficiency as a public health problem has been well established in several Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region. A number of intervention programmes including iron supplementation, dietary diversification and management of concurrent infections have been implemented with various degrees of success in the Member States. Recently fortification of staple food items with iron and folic acid has also been introduced as an additional intervention to combat iron and folic acid deficiencies in the population.

The Regional Office has been providing technical assistance to Member States to improve their national capacities in the assessment, monitoring and evaluation of micronutrient deficiencies with focus on iron deficiency and the anaemia caused by this condition. The Regional Office established a Cooperative Agreement with the Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention almost four years ago to develop standardized anaemia survey techniques and improved communication strategies for the control and prevention of iron deficiency and its anaemia, as well as folic acid deficiencies. These techniques were subsequently introduced to Member States through regional-level as well as selected national-level training workshops.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Several Member States had expressed to the Regional Office the need for technical assistance to establish national nutrition surveillance systems for monitoring micronutrient deficiencies with focus on iron deficiency anaemia. With the emergence of national flour fortification programmes in eight Member States it has also become essential to enable Member States to monitor the impact of fortification on the iron and folic acid status of the population. In consideration of this important need, the Regional Office sought the technical expertise of CDC in developing a training programme that would combine both needs in an effective package. It is my pleasure to inform you that such a training programme will be introduced for the first time in this workshop.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This training programme has been devised not only to provide the participants with a thorough grounding in the essential components of a micronutrient surveillance system, but also to impart valuable tools and techniques for monitoring the national flour fortification programmes. In view of the dual nature of this workshop, only those Member States where the flour fortification programmes exist at the national level or where a fortification pilot project has undergone long and extensive field trial have been invited. It is my belief that the interaction and sharing of experiences between the participants will not only disseminate essential technical knowledge and skills to the Member States concerned, but also provide an objective assessment of the training programme for the course organizers and EMRO to further develop its scope, approach and content for similar activities in the future.

I wish you much success in your endeavours.

Thank you.