

Statement of I.R. Iran on
A. THE GLOBAL HEALTH SECTOR STRATEGIES ON, RESPECTIVELY, HIV, VIRAL
HEPATITIS AND SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

We appreciate the DG for the progress on global health sector strategies of HIV, viral hepatitis and STI.

Hepatitis

One of the GHSS's objectives is to reduce the high incidence and mortality of hepatitis B and C. We recommend tackling with its intensifying factors such as the lack of specific clinical symptoms; the high cost of diagnostic tests and services; the unawareness of people regarding the disease symptoms, complications and its transmission routes.

Reminding the following actions in Iran, points out that if WHO supports the country to accelerate the process of active diagnosis and treatment, we will be able to reach hepatitis C elimination earlier than the set target (i.e. 2030):

- Integration of the programs for hepatitis C elimination and hepatitis B control in the PHC system, accordingly free active and passive case finding in the general population and key populations as well as free treatment have become feasible.
- 99% coverage of hepatitis B vaccination at birth and voluntary vaccination of more than 40 million people (Iranians and non-Iranians), has led to decreasing trend of hepatitis B morbidity and mortality
- 100% screening coverage for blood and blood products for hepatitis B, C, syphilis, and HIV.

However, due to the sanctions, to date we could neither procure some new antivirals with direct effect (DAA) such as Glecaprevir-pibrentasvir to treat patients with hepatitis C within eight weeks, nor apply molecular diagnostic devices effectively for point of care testing i.e. M-Pima.

We request urgent WHO action in helping Iran achieve with all-round technical and logistical support in accessing equipment and requirements, so the early elimination target of hepatitis C is feasible.

STI

On the other hand, due to the increase of STI incidence and their negative impacts (such as infertility, pregnancy complications, cancers, AMR, etc.), their effective prevention and control are very important.

In line with the STI surveillance milestone included in the GHSS, one of the valuable actions of the I.R. Iran has been the development of a syndromic and etiological surveillance of STIs. That system was presented in a WHO/EMR meeting titled “New recommendations for HIV, hepatitis and STIs (Cairo, December 2023) and was noted by several member states as well as the advisors/authorities. Accordingly, we welcome to exchange experiences with WHO and other countries in this area.

HIV/AIDS

Referring to the report of WHO/EMRO’s mission to I.R. Iran on HIV/Viral Hepatitis/STI programs in 2023, thanks to integration of free-of-charge PMTCT services as well as consultation centers for HIV and Hepatitis in PHC since 2018 for the eligible Iranians and non-Iranians, the country is close to eliminating vertical transmission. That is progress has been achieved in preventing the transmission of HIV, Hepatitis B and syphilis from mother to child (PMTCT)”.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) was introduced into the national guideline since many years ago and provide free PrEP to key populations and sero-discordant couples.

Thank you Mr./Madam Chairperson