In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Message from
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Regional Director
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to the
CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP ON THE NEW
SYSTEM OF HEALTH ACCOUNTS 2011
Doha, Qatar, 17–21 June 2012

Your Excellency,
Distinguished Participants,
Dear Colleagues,

It is with pleasure that I welcome you to the capacity-building workshop on the new system of health accounts 2011, which is known as SHA 2011. I would like to thank you for your interest in this newly published approach for health accounting, which was jointly developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the statistical office of the European Union and WHO. I would like foremost to thank Qatar Supreme Council of Health for having responded to our request to host this first workshop on SHA 2011 in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, and having generously covered the costs of participation of all our invitees. Our thanks go, in particular, to His Excellency Mr Abdulla bin Khalid Al-Qahtani, Minister of Health, and Dr Faleh Mohamed Hussain Ali, Assistant Secretary General for Policy, Supreme Council for Health, for their continuous support to our activities in Qatar and this workshop in particular. Qatar was the first country in the Region to move towards the new system of health accounts 2011, and it has expressed willingness to share the experience of its team with other countries in the Region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The work on national health accounts in the Eastern Mediterranean Region has gained increasing attention from policy and decision-makers. Since, the publication of the first
system of health accounts by the OECD in 2000, and the subsequent publication of the Guide for Producing National Health Accounts with specific applications for low- and-middle income countries by WHO, the World Bank and USAID in 2003, most countries of our Region have published a first round of their health accounts. Some have even published multiple rounds, as is the case in Egypt, Jordan and Yemen, or have worked to produce a time series expanding over several years as is the case in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

National health accounts are proven to be a powerful policy tool. They provide evidence for framing policies that promote equity and enhance fair financing by monitoring countries’ move towards universal health coverage.

Today, more than ten years of country experiences in health accounting have accumulated. This experience has highlighted the need for an update to rectify some of the shortcomings apparent in the original manuals, and to account for recent developments in health system thinking. OECD, EUROSTAT and WHO have intensively worked together during the past five years to review the previous manuals and to produce the new system of health accounts that was published late last year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The new guide for health accounting proposes a framework for the systematic description of financial flows within the health sector that is more suitable to inform national health policies, while also allowing for international comparisons. Conceptual and practical modifications have been introduced and new and more detailed classifications are suggested. This workshop is the first to share the fruits of this long-term collaboration with the most prominent health accounting experts and practitioners of the Region.

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the coming four days, you will be discussing health care financing and reflecting on the most updated tool to track expenditure in the health system. I invite you to actively participate in the workshop, to share lessons from your own practice, and to learn from the experience of our facilitators. I am confident that you will benefit greatly from the discussions and build further your capacities as pioneers of health accounting in the Region. I wish you a pleasant stay in Doha and look forward to working together in developing and promoting health accounting in our region and the entire world.