

Joint Action Framework

WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO-EURO), UNFPA Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECARO) and UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CISRO)

Objectives of the Joint Action Framework

In order to further sustain public health improvements and ensure extensive future progress on social inclusion and well-being for all, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Regional Offices' in the European Region have made a decision to strengthen further their partnership, unite and coordinate efforts in a complementary way at national and regional level, building on the experiences of previous and on-going collaboration.

The joint aim is to more effectively support Member States in achieving the health-related United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG 4, MDG 5 and MDG 6), address new challenges in the Region in the context of Health 2020 (the European policy for Health and well-being) and to assist Member States in aligning national priorities in accordance with the Health 2020 Policy, the United Nations Secretary General's Strategy on Women and Children's Health (SGSWC), the A Promise Renewed Initiative (APR) and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

This will be done through:

- strengthening cooperation and collaboration at regional and national level;
- increasing effective and efficient use of resources within and between agencies;
- improving communication and sharing of information and good practices; and
- fostering joint regional initiatives.

Background

During the last two decades, Member States in the WHO European Region have been through a profound transition period and significant social changes. Health has greatly improved but inequalities persist between and within countries in the Region, with the lowest and highest life expectancy rates at birth differing by 16 years, and with marked differences between women and men. Rural population, ethnic minorities, some migrant communities and groups of travellers, such as the Roma, continue to suffer disproportionately.

Health 2020, the European policy framework for health and well-being, adopted in 2012 by all Member States at the sixty-second session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe, sets an agenda for action focusing on equity, greater empowerment of citizens and the life-course approach. Health 2020 highlights that health is an integral part of human well-being, central to sustainable social and economic development across all sectors, and a key indicator

of what people-centred, rights-based, inclusive, and equitable development seeks to achieve. Health 2020 advocates vigorously for partnership strengthening, within and beyond the United Nations system, broad collaboration with civil society and inter-sectoral action to reduce inequities. In line with the Health 2020 and the Essential Public Health Operations, WHO has a leading role in advising governments on the implementation of these policies and collaborates on strengthening public health capacities in the countries.

The MDGs have been a key milestone in regional and national development efforts for the last thirteen years. While significant progress has been achieved in reaching the goals prior to 2015, the internationally agreed deadline, progress has been uneven within and between the countries in the Region. With little time remaining until 2015, mobilization of additional focus and a strongly coordinated approach in coherence with national plans is of critical importance to cover the final stages to achieve the MDGs.

The United Nations Secretary General's Strategy on Women and Children's Health (SGSWC) and the A Promise Renewed Initiative (APR) call for better synergy and accountability between partners for an accelerated and equity-focused approach to achieving reduction of child and maternal mortality and other health related MDGs. The outcome of global and regional review of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action implementation, and the reaffirmed political commitment to it by the Member States as well as the United Nations post-2015 development agenda review process, will also provide opportunities to galvanize development efforts and guide regional and national development priorities.

Mechanisms for joint United Nations action at regional level are under the auspices of the Regional United Nations Development Group. At country level, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) is the instrument for coherent and strategic United Nations engagement. WHO, UNFPA and UNICEF Regional Offices have established a strong collaboration for the last decade in providing coordinated support to countries in the Region to achieve the MDGs in the context of a coherent United Nations.

Umbrella action framework between UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO Regional Offices

The three Regional Offices will continue to collaborate together with other United Nations agencies, funds, programmes and secretariats, governments, international partners and civil society organizations and will:

- Consolidate the work on implementing evidence-based effective reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health interventions to further contribute to the achievement of MDG 4, MDG 5 and MDG 6.
- Support quality improvements in health care delivery for women and children and work towards universal coverage focusing on countries where enhanced efforts are required to achieve national and international targets and on the most under-served and vulnerable populations e.g. women, children and adolescents in poverty, legal and illegal migrants, Roma and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and reduce structural barriers and bottlenecks to accessing essential services.
- Further strengthen joint support for development and implementation of collaborative platforms at regional and sub-regional levels.
- Support joint advocacy and policy events aiming at accelerating progress towards MDGs and relevant Health 2020 targets.
- Support in the implementation of the recommendations on Life-saving Commodities for Women and Children.

More specifically, joint action will focus on the following:

Equity-focused policy formulation and programming

- Support country efforts to establish national priorities, identify and reach the most under-served populations, develop indicators and robust means of verification when needed, and provide advice or support on implementation of effective sexual and reproductive health and maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health programmes.

Promoting gender equality through the life-course

- Support gender mainstreaming into health policies and programmes.
- Support governments and partners to combat gender-based violence.

Focusing on under-served populations (including Roma communities, migrants and mobile populations)

- Support developing capacities of governments and other stakeholders to monitor and deliver on the health components of the National Roma Integration Strategies and the Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plans with a focus on women and children.
- Facilitate policy dialogue, cooperation and collaboration among governments, the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and civil society to increase understanding of migration.

Working with key populations at higher risk of HIV, STIs and viral hepatitis

- Increase coverage of prevention, treatment and care among sex workers, men who have sex with men, injecting drug users and their sexual partners, transgender people, prisoners and most vulnerable adolescents and young people.
- Increase coverage and quality of services for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) of HIV and the prevention of congenital syphilis. Review progress of elimination of MTCT of HIV and elimination of congenital syphilis and progress towards validation of elimination.
- In countries graduating from The Global Fund support, advocate for and facilitate increased investment from domestic sources in order to achieve sustainability.

Bilateral action framework between UNICEF and WHO Regional Offices

- Strengthen the capacity of governments and partners to develop monitoring systems and implement activities to strengthen the capacity of health managers to implement quality and equity focused maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health programmes.
- Support countries in building public health capacities to communicate widely on safety and effectiveness of vaccines, parenting, safe behaviours in youth and prevention of violence and injuries.
- Promoting effective interventions to address malnutrition in women and children.
- Enhance inter-sectoral collaboration for early childhood interventions, including through a greater role of community and home-visiting nurses and integration of care with social services.
- Strengthen routine immunization programmes by continuing to support comprehensive programme reviews and sustainable vaccine financing and supply, cold chain and logistics, demand creation and immunization of the unreached populations.
- Jointly support countries to maintain the polio-free status of the Region and achieve measles and rubella elimination targets.

- In countries graduating from the Global Alliance for Vaccines Initiative (GAVI) support, facilitate the transition to fully government funded immunization programmes. Support implementation of transition plans developed under the auspices of the Regional Working Group on Immunization.

Bilateral action framework between UNFPA and WHO Regional Offices

- Increase access to sexuality education, family planning services and safe abortion.
- Improve access to and quality of perinatal services.
- Reduce teenage pregnancies and gender-based violence among adolescents.
- Improve access to friendly and age appropriate services and reduce inequalities in access to sexual health services, including services for sexually transmitted infections, and reproductive health services.
- Ensure technical assistance for the development, dissemination and implementation of multi-sectoral services standards on gender-based violence (GBV), with emphasis on the health sector response and sexual and reproductive health and family planning services and integration of WHO standards and protocols for provision of essential services for GBV survivors.
- Develop or strengthen the national maternal death audit systems by using WHO “Beyond the Numbers” method.
- Assist Member States in the implementation of WHO guidance on cervical cancer prevention policies and programmes.
- Strengthen national policies and strategies on active ageing and supporting intergenerational solidarity.
- Strengthen support to countries for comprehensive data collection in all age groups including older people surveys or administrative data systems.

Bilateral action framework between UNFPA and UNICEF Regional Offices

- Increase capacity of partners to design and implement services and programmes to reach marginalized adolescents.
- Strengthen support to countries in developing and implementing youth friendly health services, ensuring access by marginalized adolescents and young people.
- Strengthen civil registration and vital statistics systems with particular attention to children and young people.

Monitoring and Accountability

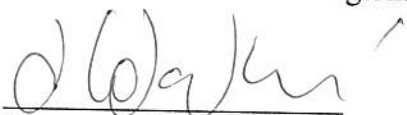
The three Regional Offices will strengthen mutual accountabilities and monitoring of results vis-à-vis the progress in countries on Health 2020, MDGs, the United Nations Secretary General’s Strategy on Women and Children’s Health (SGSWC), the A Promise Renewed Initiative (APR), and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)

Programme of Action. WHO and UNICEF will support the activities relating to the United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Child Mortality Estimation (UN-IGME).

- Regular WHO, UNFPA, and UNICEF meetings of Regional Directors' to share strategic developments and progress updates will be held back to back to, and in the context of, the Regional United Nations Development Group.
- Annual regional planning meetings will be held between the Regional Offices and operational workplans will be developed.
- Documents and reports related to regional collaboration will be shared among partners.
- Joint annual country reporting on joint initiatives will be strengthened.
- A formal review of the action framework will be carried out in 2016.

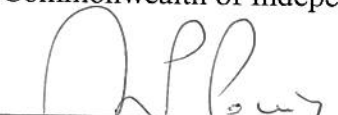
Signed, at the sixty-third WHO Regional Committee for Europe, Çeşme Izmir, Turkey, 18 September 2013,

On behalf of the WHO Regional Office for Europe:




Zsuzsanna Jakab, Regional Director

On behalf of the UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States:



Marie-Pierre Poirier, Regional Director

On behalf of the UNFPA Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia:



Werner Haug, Regional Director