



*In Partnership with*



*Cordially invites you to a*

***Regional Conference on “Achieving Better Health Equity and Efficiency in the Middle East and North Africa”***

**June 6 - 8, 2010  
Amman, Jordan**

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**1. Background**

The MENA region has made remarkable progress over the past three decades in terms of expanding access to basic health services and improving the health status of its population. The region has recorded one of the fastest rates of decline in child mortality among all the developing Regions of the world. Despite significant and laudable improvements in health outcomes over the past decade, the MENA region faces new challenges in meeting the changing health needs of the population.

Access to comprehensive health coverage is limited and distribution of health services is skewed towards urbanized areas and higher socioeconomic status. Many countries show significant disparities in maternal and child health outcomes between rural and urban regions, and between rich and poor population groups. Child malnutrition persists as a significant problem especially among the low income groups, and its negative effect lasts long as it hampers the child’s ability to learn and become a productive member of the labor force. With the exception of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, most MENA countries show high dependence on direct, out-of-pocket payments by households, which account for more than half of the total health spending. These trends reveal the inadequacies of the existing risk-pooling and financial protection mechanisms to ensure affordable access to health care.

The impact of epidemiological and demographic transition is beginning to be felt through the rise of chronic diseases and injuries as the major burdens of disease. The MENA countries have relatively young populations – a factor that has helped to keep down the cost of healthcare. Yet the current cohort of youths shows an increasing prevalence of risk factors such as obesity, sedentary lifestyles and tobacco smoking. These conditions predispose them to chronic diseases that will likely manifest during their middle age years, and will consequently add to the demand for healthcare among this group. Another

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emerging problem is the rapid rise in road accidents as a major cause of death and disability, particularly among the working age population.

Governance and accountability in the health sector remain weak. Centralized public administrative structure remains a predominant structure for healthcare delivery in most countries in the region. This condition is delaying the emergence of a modern governance structure in the health sector: the budget process remains focused on inputs rather than outputs; government facilities have little scope for, or incentives to take, independent actions to improve quality or productivity; and private sector remains largely outside of the formal health coverage framework. There is an urgent need to develop quality and productivity standards and apply these to measure quality, safety and efficiency of health care. Independent assessment mechanisms are needed to oversee the performance of the health system, whether private or publicly provided, and to give greater voice to consumers of healthcare.

The aim of the MENA Health Policy Forum is to stimulate the development of effective health policy formulation, evaluation and information sharing in the Region. It aims to do so by acting as an independent advocate for effective policy making and promoting evidence-based measures that will improve the health of the people in the MENA region and mitigate the adverse consequences of illness, particularly for those who are most disadvantaged.

## 2. Conference Objective

The Conference aims to provide a platform for reviewing the state of research and evidence available from the region in order to identify key policy and research gaps. Lessons from global experiences will also be examined to assess their suitability and adaptability to the region. The Conference will focus on two critical aspects of the health system: (i) Equity in health and healthcare, and (ii) Quality and Efficiency of Healthcare.

The Conference will (a) present scientific papers and review the available evidence on the performance of health systems in the MENA Region with respect to these two dimensions of performance; (b) provide a context in which health and healthcare are evolving in the region, including the drivers of change that are likely to affect performance in the coming years; and (c) identify emerging challenges to which the policy makers and researchers should be giving priority attention in terms of reform agenda.

This Conference is the first of a series of events that will be organized by the Forum. The findings and recommendations emerging from the Conference will be used to guide the priorities for future work to be commissioned by the Forum to support the critical policy research in the Region.

## 3. Conference Structure

The Conference will provide a platform for presenting scientific papers from a wide range of researchers on the two themes in parallel sessions, and will include presentations and panel discussions by international experts and policy makers from the region. All Conference participants will be encouraged to contribute to the discussions and debate at all the sessions.

The Forum also will be awarding prizes for winners of the Scientific Papers and Documentaries, as a mechanism for promoting and encouraging research in critical areas.

### Conference Themes

#### Equity Theme

The Conference will present the following aspects of equity, and will discuss policy initiatives that will address the different aspects:

- Social determinants of health inequality;

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- Equity in healthcare financing;
- Equity in access and use of healthcare; and
- Equity in health outcomes.

Quality and Efficiency Theme

The available evidence on quality and efficiency of healthcare in the MENA is more limited than the evidence on equity. One of the major challenges is to define relevant indicators of quality and efficiency in healthcare, and identify appropriate instruments and approaches to measuring them and creating incentives to improve performance in these dimensions of healthcare. The conference will aim:

- to assess the data and evidence available on quality and efficiency of healthcare in the Region
- to discuss and to analyze problems in policy making that contribute to the lack or poor quality of data on quality and efficiency in the MENA Region, and justifications for investing in new instruments and mechanisms for measuring quality and efficiency
- to propose initiatives for enhancing accountability and creating incentives for improving quality and efficiency of healthcare.

**Target Audience**

- Senior policy makers, including government officials from Ministries of Health, Social Affairs, Financing, Planning, and International Cooperation, as relevant;
- Representatives from civil society, academia, and the media; and
- Development partners active in the region.

Number of participants expected: 100-125 persons.

Venue: Amman, Jordan  
Dates: June 6 - 8, 2010  
Co-sponsors: Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research, European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, International Development Research Centre (Canada), World Health Organization Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office, The World Bank, UK Department of Health  
Host: Ministry of Health, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan  
Co-Organizers: The World Bank and MENA Health Policy Forum

Language: English is the working language of the conference, but simultaneous translation to/from Arabic will be provided for the plenary sessions.

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CONFERENCE AGENDA

*Sunday, June 6, 2010*

| Time                  | Activity  |
|-----------------------|---|
| PRE-CONFERENCE EVENTS |   |
| 9:00-13:30            | <b>Pre-conference Workshop</b><br>Pharmaceutical Governance in the Middle East and North Africa<br><i>The World Bank and MENA Health Policy Forum</i>   |
| 14:00-16:30           | <b>SPECIAL EVENTS</b><br><b>“Health in the Middle East and North Africa – Pathway towards Inclusive and Sustainable Growth” – The World Bank</b><br>Presentation: Akiko Maeda, Health Sector Manager<br><i>The Middle East North Africa Region, The World Bank</i><br><br><b>Book Launch “Health and Growth”</b><br>Growth Commission<br>Presentation by Maureen Lewis, Advisor<br><i>Development Economics Operations and Strategy, The World Bank</i> |
| CONFERENCE            |   |
| 17:00-19:00           | <i>Conference Registration</i>  |
| 19:00- 20:00          | <i>Welcoming Reception</i>  |

*Monday, June 7, 2010*

| Time   | Session  | Speaker/ Presenter   |
|--|--|--|
| OPENING SESSION  |  |  |
| 9:00 – 9:15  | Opening Remarks  | <i>Dr. Ahmed Galal<br/>Chairman, MENA Health Policy Forum</i>  |
| 9:15 – 9:30  | Welcoming Speech   | <i>H.E. Dr. Nayef Al-Fayez<br/>Minister of Health, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan</i>   |
| 9.30– 10:00  | Keynote Speaker<br>“Global Challenges in Measuring Performance for Health Equity Improvement – What Lessons for the MENA Countries?”                                 | <i>Professor Elias Mossialos<br/>Special Advisor to Prime Minister of Greece, Professor of Health Policy at London School of Economics, and Co-Director at European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies</i> |
| 10:00 – 10:15  | Coffee /Tea Break  |  |
| PLENARY 1 – CHAIR: Dr Nayef Al Fayez<br><b>Determinants of health inequalities and inefficiencies - Drivers for change in the MENA region: unfinished agenda and emerging challenges</b> |  |  |
| 10:15 – 10:35  | Impact of epidemiological and demographic transition on health equity in the MENA Region: emerging challenges due the rise in non-communicable diseases and injuries | <i>Dr. Ala’a Alwan<br/>Assistant Director-General for Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health, World Health Organization, Geneva</i>  |
| 10:35 – 10:55  | Raising Performance in health Care: the Role of Governance and Accountability - Implications for the MENA Region   | <i>Dr. Maureen Lewis<br/>Advisor, Development Economics Strategy and Operations, The World Bank</i>  |
| 10:55-11:15  | Discussant   | Dr Sameh El-Saharty  |
| 11:15 – 11:45  | <i>Discussion</i>  |  |

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| Time   | Session   | Speaker/ Presenter  |
|--|---|---|
| PLENARY 2 - CHAIR: Dr. Nabil Kronfol, MENA Health Policy Forum<br><b>Measuring Quality and Efficiency of Healthcare in the MENA Region for Better Accountability</b>   |   |   |
| 11:45 – 12:05  | Measuring Quality and Efficiency of Healthcare in the MENA Region for Better Accountability                       | <i>Dr. Akiko Maeda<br/>Health Sector Manager, Middle East &amp; North Africa Region, The World Bank</i>   |
| 12:05 – 12:25  | Evaluating health system performance to improve quality and efficiency –Why does this matter for the MENA Region? | <i>Dr. Kalipso Chalkidou<br/>Director, Policy Consulting<br/>UK National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence</i>   |
| 12:25 – 12:55  | <i>Discussion</i>   |   |
| 12:55 – 14:00  | <b>Lunch</b>  |   |
| Parallel Session A: Measuring Quality and Efficiency of Healthcare   |   |   |
| Session Chair: Dr Mournir Michel Kharma  |   |   |
| 14:00 – 14:20  | Application of health technology assessment in Egypt: Hepatitis C virus case study                                | <i>Dr. M. M. ElBatan, Dr. C.J. Phillips and Dr. I. Waked<br/><br/>Cairo University; Swansea University; Menoufia University</i>                                       |
| 14:20-14:40  | Classification of Severe Childhood Illness in Egypt   | <i>Dr. Ray Langsten, Dr. Susan Saad- I. Khalil;<br/>Dr. Mahmoud el-Mougi<br/>American University in Cairo; Staten Island University Hospital; Al-Azhar University</i> |
| 14:40-15:00  | Discussant  |   |
| 15:00-15:30  | <i>Open Discussion</i>  |   |
| Parallel Session B: Data to Assess Equity of Financing and Access  |   |   |
| Session Chair: Dr Waleed Al Faisal   |   |   |
| 14:00 – 14:20  | Using Demographic health Survey Data for Health Planning and Policy   | <i>Dr. A. O. Manesh and Dr. Roy Carr-Hill<br/>Ministry of Health, Iran; University of York</i>  |
| 14:20-14:40  | National Health Accounts: The Missing Lifesaver in the Current Financial Crisis?                                  | <i>Mr. Altijani Hussin and Mr. Faleh M. Ali<br/>Supreme Council of Health,<br/>Doha, Qatar</i>  |
| 14:40-15:00  | Discussant  |   |
| 15:00-15:30  | <i>Open Discussion</i>  |   |
| Parallel Session C: Geographical Inequities in Delivery and Access   |   |   |
| Session Chair: Dr Mary Deeb  |   |   |
| 14:00 – 14:20  | Obligatory Service Requirement and Physician Distribution in Turkey   | <i>Dr. Burcay Erus<br/>Bogazici University</i>  |
| 14:20-14:40  | Equity in distribution of Medical Human Resources for Health in Syria and Germany: A Comparative Study            | <i>Dr. Saleh Daoud, Dr. Waleed Al Faisal<br/>Damascus University</i>  |
| 14:40-15:00  | Discussant  |   |
| 15:00-15:30  | <i>Open Discussion</i>  |   |
| 15:30 – 16:00  | <b>Coffee/ Tea Break</b>  |   |
| Plenary 3: PANEL DISCUSSION CHAIR - Dr. Fadi El-Jardali<br><b>Promoting Evidence-based Policies to Deliver Health Equity:<br/>Lessons from global experiences and their implications for the MENA region</b> |   |   |
| 16:00-16:20  | Perspective from the global health research community   | <i>Dr. Ibrahim Daibes<br/>Global Health Research Initiative, International Development</i>  |

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| Time          | Session   | Speaker/ Presenter  |
|---------------|---|---|
|               |   | <i>Research Centre (IDRC)</i>   |
| 16:20-16:40   | Promoting health policy and systems research to improve healthcare performance of developing countries. | <i>Dr. Abdul Ghaffar<br/>Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research</i>    |
| 16:40 – 17:30 | Perspectives from MENA health policy makers   | <i>Representative from Lebanon - Ministry of Public Health (TBC)</i>            |
|               |   | <i>Representative from Syria – (TBC)</i>  |
|               |   | <i>Representative from Yemen Ministry of Public Health and Population (TBC)</i> |
| 17:30-18:00   | PANEL DISCUSSION  |   |
| 20:00 – 22:00 | CONFERENCE DINNER   |   |

*Tuesday, June 8, 2010*

| Time  | Session   | Speaker/Presenter  |
|---|---|--|
| PLENARY 4 - CHAIR: Dr Ala Alwan<br><b>Inequities in Healthcare Funding and Outcomes</b>   |   |  |
| 9:00 – 9:20   | Who Pays? Out-of-Pocket Health Payments and Equity Implications in the Middle East and North Africa | <i>Dr. Heba Elgazzar<br/>Health Economist, Middle East &amp; North Africa Region,<br/>The World Bank</i>   |
| 9:20 – 9:40   | Catastrophic Health Care Payments and Impoverishment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory          | <i>Dr. Awad Mataria<br/>Health Economist – Health Economics and Health Care Financing Unit, Division of Health Systems and Service Delivery, World Health Organization - Eastern-Mediterranean Regional Office</i> |
| 9:40-10:00  | Chronic Diseases and Labor Market Outcomes in Egypt – Potential Impact of Health on Economic Growth | <i>Dr. Lorenzo Rocco<br/>Assistant Professor, University of Padua</i>  |
| 10:00-10:30   | <i>Discussion</i>   |  |
| 10:30-10:45   | Coffee/Tea Break  |  |
| PLENARY 5 – CHAIR: Dr Raeda Al-Qutob<br><b>Building Incentives for Better Performance</b> |   |  |
| 11:00-11:20   | Reforming Mixed Health Systems  | <i>Dr. Sania Nishtar<br/>Founder, Heartfile</i>  |
| 11:20 – 11:40   | Establishing quality standards for hospital contracts in the Palestinian context                    | <i>Dr. Tawfiq Nasser<br/>Director, Augusta Victoria Hospital<br/>Jerusalem</i>   |
| 11:40-12:00   | The challenge of patient safety in hospitals: How serious is the problem in countries of the region | <i>Dr. Sameen Siddiqi<br/>Coordinator, Health System s Development<br/>WHO/EMRO</i>  |
| 12:00-12:30   | <i>Discussion</i>   |  |
| 12:30 – 14:00   | Lunch   |  |
| Parallel Session D: Equity in <b>Women’s Health Outcomes</b>                              |   |  |
| Session Chair: Dr Salwa Najjab  |   |  |

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| Time   | Session  | Speaker/Presenter   |
|--|--|---|
| 13:30 – 13:50  | What Drives The Ramadan Effect? Reexamining the Health Impacts of Maternal Fasting through the Lens of Religious Health Disparities and Access to Health Services in Egypt | <i>Dr. Benjamin Schwab<br/>University of Wisconsin, Madison</i>   |
| 13:50 – 14:10  | Socioeconomic Gradient and Women's Self-Rated Health: Evidence from a Population-Based Survey in Lebanon   | <i>Dr. Sawsan Abdulrahim and Dr. Marwan Khawaja<br/>American University of Beirut</i>   |
| 14:10 – 14:30  | Obesity in Egypt: trends, socioeconomic inequalities and determinants  | <i>Dr. E. Fumagalli and Prof. Marc Suhrcke<br/>University of East Anglia; European Observatory</i>  |
| 14:30 – 15:00  | Discussant   |   |
| 15:00- 15:30   | <i>Discussion</i>  |   |
| <b>Parallel Session E: Equity in Health Outcomes</b>                           |  |   |
| <b>Session Chair: Dr Najib Harabi</b>  |  |   |
| 13:30 – 14:00  | Examining Equal Access to Healthcare among Nationals and Expatriates: Evidence from Qatar's World Health Survey  | <i>Mr. Altijani Hussin and Mr. Faleh M. Ali<br/>Supreme Council of Health,<br/>Doha, Qatar</i>  |
| 14:00 – 14:30  | Inequalities in Maternal and Child Health in the MENA Region   | <i>Dr. Abdelmajid Tibouti<br/>Senior Advisor, Programme Division, UNICEF</i>  |
| 14:30 – 15:00  | Discussant   |   |
| 15:00 – 15:30  | <i>Open Discussion</i>   |   |
| <b>Parallel Session F: Inequalities in Health Financing</b>                    |  |   |
| <b>Chair: Dr. Musa Ajluni</b>  |  |   |
| 13:30 – 13:50  | Financial Burden of Health Care Expenditures in Turkey: 2002-2003  | <i>Dr. Seher Nur Sulku and Dr. Didem Bernard<br/>Ministry of Health, Turkey; Department of Health and Human Services, USA</i>             |
| 13:50 – 14:10  | Catastrophic health expenditures and impoverishment in Tunisia   | <i>Dr. Arfa Chokri, Dr. Ben Romdhane Habiba and Dr. Achour Noureddine<br/>University of Carthage</i>                                      |
| 14:10 – 14:30  | Health Equity in Lebanon: A Microeconomic Analysis   | <i>Dr. Nisreen Salti, Dr. Jad Chaaban, and<br/>Dr. Firas Raad<br/>American University of Beirut; Office of the Quartet Representative</i> |
| 14:30 – 15:00  | Discussant   |   |
| 15:00- 15:30   | <i>Open Discussion</i>   |   |
| 15:30 – 16:00  | <b>Coffee/Tea Break</b>  |   |
| <b>PLENARY 6 – CHAIR: Dr Ahmed Galal, Chairman, MENA HPF</b>                   |  |   |
| <b>Closing Session – Pathways towards Evidence-based Health Policy</b>         |  |   |
| 16:00- 16:30   | Key Messages from the Conference and Next Steps for the Forum  | <i>Dr. Sameera Tuwajiri<br/>Executive Director, MENA Health Policy Forum</i>  |
| <b>Award Presentations: Winners of the Scientific Papers and Documentaries</b> |  |   |
| 16:30-17:00  | Call for papers and best abstracts   | <i>Dr. Barry McCormick, Chief Economist, UK Department of Health<br/>Scientific Committee of the MENA Health Policy Forum</i>             |
| 17:00 -17:30   | <b>Closing Remarks and Acknowledgements</b>  |   |

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| Time                              | Session  | Speaker/Presenter    |
|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| CLOSED SESSION FOR FORUM BUSINESS |  |                      |
| 17:30– 18:30                      | Open Discussion of Priorities for the MENA HPF | <i>Forum Members</i> |

*Wednesday, June 9 2010*

| Time       | Activity   |
|------------|--|
| 8:30-13:00 | MENA Health Policy Forum Board Meeting<br><i>Forum Board Members</i><br>Location to be announced |