



Governance in Universal Health Coverage

Regional Workshop
21- 22 January 2015
Cairo, Egypt

منتدى السياسات الصحية في الشرق الأوسط وشمال افريقيا
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA HEALTH POLICY FORUM



In collaboration with:



Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

**Summary report on *Governance in Universal Health Coverage* Workshop:
January 21–22, 2015, Cairo, Egypt**



“The challenges are enormous as you all are aware, in Egypt and in other countries that you all represent. It is easy to look at the budget constraints and think of it as the only or main challenge. Sure, there are budget constraints. I do believe that the whole point of this workshop and this effort is to precisely point out the fact that the real solution to budgetary constraints is not borrowing, is not receiving grants, is not charity, but it is actually governance. This to me is the only possible solution to the budgetary constraints that we have to live with for a long time to come. Why is that? Because if governance is applied properly, it will do three things: it will eliminate or at least reduce the amount of corruption in the health system; it will also eliminate or reduce redundancy by ensuring that resources go where they are most needed; and it will provide credibility to the system and a sense of ownership by the people, and that alone will translate into remarkable budgetary savings.”

— **From the keynote speech given by Dr. Ziad Bahaa Eldin, former deputy prime minister and former minister of international cooperation in Egypt**



Summary of workshop proceedings

In collaboration with the World Bank and the World Health Organization, MENA HPF organized a two-day regional workshop titled “Governance in Universal Health Coverage.” The workshop is part of a broader MENA HPF program that aims to improve governance for universal health coverage (UHC) in the MENA region through: (i) bringing policy agendas more in line with research; (ii) empowering key decision-makers across sectors to foster new and innovative ways of acting and collaborating to achieve transformational change; and (iii) supporting activities to achieve universal health coverage by addressing key challenges and opportunities across regional and national interventions.

The objectives of the workshop were to provide a platform for dialogue among regional professionals; highlight various approaches to address governance of health systems for UHC; share experiences and evidence-based observations for strategic investments in health; and recommend policy options to develop regional mechanisms.

The workshop was organized to allow discussions and promote the exchange of experience in an attempt to understand, define, and identify the challenges and opportunities that facilitate or weaken governance for the achievement of UHC.¹

Some 57 participants from various countries in the region and with a diversity of experiences and specialties—technical experts, policymakers, parliamentarians, academics, and private sector actors— came together to engage in dialogue and free interactions over the two days of the workshop. The keynote address was presented by Dr. Ziad Bahaa Eldin, former minister of international cooperation, and focused on the importance of governance and social protection for development and universal health coverage (video uploaded on www.menahpf.org). The first day’s agenda included presentations on UHC, a glance at governance in the region, and the need for equity and accountability in the right to health. The second day addressed mainly governance of the pharmaceutical sector with diverse presentations and panel discussions.

¹ This report provides a summary of the key themes raised over the course of the workshop. The agenda, presentations, and summary reports can be found on the website at www.menahpf.org.





Key lessons

**“No best model for UHC”—Dr. Tamer Rabie, Senior Health Specialist
Health, Nutrition and Population Global Practice, World Bank**

Universal Health Coverage and Governance

Structure

- Achieving UHC is by no means an easy process. It is a very long process and we need to be mindful of that as we go along with awareness that it requires much effort from the government as well as civil society.
- The public sector obviously has a huge role to play, and UHC without the public sector is not going to work.
- When a problem is identified at the micro level, it is more concrete and manageable, and can better generate evidence. From a research point of view, we should be more concrete, more focused, and more objectively based.



Assessment

- Different frameworks for UHC and governance are available but they are not translated into operational actions that would assist in their full implementation. Hence, there remains a gap between what should be done and how it should be done. Assessment tools like the UNICO and UNICAT- developed by World Bank/WHO- create opportunities in addressing the existing situations and developing corrective actions by conducting systematic assessments. Regional evidence-based research is needed to guide the policy formulation.

Social Protection

- There is a need for policies that reduce inequalities and disparities and promote equity. Information is needed and access to information is essential to empower citizens and civil society to play their roles in promoting sound policies.
- Financial constraints are not the only limitation faced by health systems; the real solution is genuine governance to reduce corruption and redundancy.
- It is essential to look at governance outside the health sector and address the social aspects of UHC in a comprehensive manner.

Pharmaceutical Sector

- Governance of the pharmaceutical sector is an area that should be addressed, given the complexity of the pharmaceutical context and its vulnerability to corruption. The fact that it is directly connected to individuals, financing, regulation, and rights makes it relevant for governance and UHC.
- Research needs to be done to assess this sector along its value chain.
- Intellectual property regulations have to be put in favor of the patient. Whatever agreements that are formed should be done without damaging health access.



Policy implications

- **The political context of the region presents a challenge in addressing the many issues related to governance and universal health coverage due to the instability of governments.** Global experiences demonstrate that there are a wide range of actions and plans to strengthen governance for UHC, but they all indicate that a strong political commitment is essential for the implementation and sustainability of reform programs, which must be based on sound, valid analysis. Of course, political support for UHC may waver in light of competing priorities, but there is a need to preserve the stability and functionality of the system because we cannot afford another major shakeup of the system.
- **Post-2015 development goals will need to address interactions between the fields of health, financing, economics, and research.** The need for strong national and political commitment and leadership to initiate and sustain UHC is essential, while bearing in mind that there is no single pathway to universal health coverage. Insufficient exchange of experiences and the lack of case studies from the region pose a challenge for researchers and practitioners.
- **Financing and financial sustainability and risk protection still pose a challenge to universal health coverage.** Strong governance and regulatory functions are important for efficient implementation and equitable resource allocation. A question that merits further investigation is how to avoid errors in implementation, not to mention how to choose the best financing system.
- **Sound monitoring and assessment are essential to determine how well strategies are implemented.** It is important to identify not only weaknesses, but improvements as well. Common, comparable indicators of progress toward UHC are needed in order to enable countries to initiate reforms, facilitate the comparison and assessment of outcomes, and respond with the necessary reforms.
- **Thinking about health as part of a wider protection agenda is an important issue.** There are many approaches to this issue, one of which is empowering people through education, health, and social services that mitigate inequities. The idea is that people concerned with health issues should not be held hostage by the health system. It is important to incorporate UHC into a broader social protection umbrella to benefit from the resulting



synergies.

- **Cooperative governance and stakeholder coordination are areas that require improvement.** Governance is under-stressed in attempts to address healthcare and explain the ambiguities of different frameworks for healthcare governance.
- **Governance of the pharmaceutical sector is a good entry point for the issue of governance and universal health coverage** in light of the complexity of the context and the vulnerability to corruption. Moreover, the fact that it is directly linked to universal health coverage and rights issues necessitates mobilization and discussions, while its direct connection to individuals, financing, regulation, and rights makes it relevant for governance and UHC.
- **Generating and mapping evidence as well as capacity building are needed in areas with proven research gaps**, for example public health policies and governance using an approach based on human rights and equity; pharmaceutical governance; and the development of an analytical framework for governance. Research should produce outcomes to guide policy directions that can support the system.

The role of MENA HPF

MENA HPF will continue to work with partners from national and international organizations on policy directions and key points in view of its mandate and mission. Specifically, the role envisioned for the MENA HPF in view of the workshop outcomes includes:

- 1- Conducting state-of-the-art research and promoting capacity building, especially in areas where gaps exist.
- 2- Disseminating information, especially since there are numerous success stories in the region that can highlight efforts to date.
- 3- Collecting data and benchmarks of progress toward UHC using World Bank and WHO frameworks.



- 4- Assisting in developing a workable framework for UHC and social protection.
- 5- Addressing regional governance of the pharmaceutical sector.
- 6- Assist in the conduction of health system assessments utilizing world bank assessment tools



Agenda Day 1: 21 January 2015

08:30–09:00 Registration.

09:00–10:00 Opening Session.

- Chairperson: Dr. Tawfiq Nasser, MENA HPF
- Opening Remarks: Dr. Salwa Najjab, MENA HPF
- Speakers: Dr. Maha El Rabbat, MENA HPF, Dr. Tamer Rabie; World Bank
- Keynote Speaker: Dr. Ziad Bahaa Aldin, Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Cooperation in Egypt.

10:00–11:15 Session 1: Universal Health Coverage in the MENA Region from Theory to Action.

- Moderator: Dr. Fadi Jardali,
- AUB Speakers: Dr. Awad Mataria, WHO/EMRO
- Open discussion

11:15–11:45 Coffee Break.

11:45–13:00 Session 2: A Glance at Governance Efforts in the Region

- Moderator: Senator Dr. Raeda Alqutob, University of Jordan
- Speaker: Dr. Mostafa Hunter, HeGTA
- Open Discussion

13:00–14:15 Session 3: Governance Assessment Framework with Application in One Country: Egypt

- Moderator: Dr. Nabil Koronfol LHCMA.
- Speakers: Dr. Emad El-Azazy, EHGF; Dr. Alaa Ghanam, EIPR.
- Open Discussion

14:15–15:15 Lunch

15:15–16:30 Session 4: Right to Health and Health Equity for Action.

- Moderator: Dr. Chokri Arafa, University of Carthage.
- Speakers: Dr. Leonardo Cubillios-Turricyo, World Bank (VC); Dr. Hala Abou Taleb; Dr. Riku Elovianio, WHO.
- Open discussion.



Agenda Day 2: January 22, 2015

09:00–10:15 Session 5: Intellectual Property Law Related to Pharmaceutical Sector

- Moderator: Dr. El Sheik Badr, Sudan Medical Specialization.
- Board Speaker: Dr. Mokhtar Warida, Counselor at Egyptian Agency for Partnership for Development at the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Open Discussion.

10:15–11:30 Session 6: Barriers, Challenges, and Opportunities for Governance in the Pharmaceutical Sector Panel Discussion.

- Moderator: Dr. Najib Harabi, Northwestern, Switzerland.
- Panelists: Dr. Awad Tag El Din, Professor at Ain Shams University; Dr. Abd el Aziz Shaheen, Pfizer; Dr. Gamal El-Leithy, Future Pharmaceuticals.
- Open Discussion.

11:30–12:15 Coffee Break.

12:15–13:30 Session 7: Governance of the Pharmaceutical Sector.

- Moderator: Dr. Mary Deeb, MENA HPF.
- Speakers: Dr. Eric Mallard, World Bank (VC); Dr. Mohamd Ramzy, WHO/EMRO.
- Open Discussion.

13:30–14:45 Lunch.

14:45–16:00 Session 8: Policy Implications for Governance Strengthening in UHC.

- Panel Discussion Moderator: Dr. Ahmad Galal, ERF Panelists: Dr. Iman Nuwayhid, FHS; Senator Dr. Lubna Alansary, Saud University; Dr. Tamer Rabei, World Bank; Dr. Maha El Rabbat, MENA HPF.
- Open Discussion.

16:00–16:30 Closing Remarks Dr. Salwa Najjab, MENA HPF.



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