

## Health Sector Working Group Meeting, January 2024

### Minutes of Meeting

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**Date:** 25 January 2024

**Place:** UNHCR Amman Branch Office

**Chaired by:** Adam Musa Khalifa – POPESCU, Christian

**Attendees:** UNHCR, WHO, UNFPA, CVT, Islamic Relief Jordan, Caritas Jordan, IRC, IMC, RHAS, HI, Medair, Save the Children Jordan, CDE.

#### Operational Updates (WHO)

A new call for the Pandemic fund has been issued. We will be working under the leadership of the Ministry of Health and together with other national entities and the implementing agencies, namely UNICEF and FAO, on the proposal. We may reach out bilaterally to the relevant organizations in this regard. Another short update is that WHO has received funding from the multi-Partner Trust Fund for Migration, which is an IOM led coordinated mechanism. We will be working with IOM over the next two years to assess the linkages between health, migration and climate change and develop jointly with the health authorities at capital and governorate levels, adaptation strategies and plans. The country health assessment report for refugees and migrants is still under endorsement by MoH.

#### Operational Updates (UNHCR)

UNHCR will conduct the regional public health workshop in Amman by the end of January 2024. The workshop will be attended by the public health colleagues from UNHCR country operations in the region including, Mauritania, Algeria, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon, Jordan, and Yemen. This will be the first regional public health workshop after the COVID-19 pandemic. UNHCR public health colleagues from Geneva, including the Chief of Public Health Section will also attend the workshop. Important global development like the Global Refugee Forum that took place in Geneva in 2023, the global and regional pledges, new policies, and guidance involving refugees will be discussed in the workshop in addition to other topics of public health importance in the region. Meetings with the relevant stakeholders including MoH, USAID, WHO and health agencies involved in health response in Jordan will be conducted to discuss the current and future health strategies and policies from refugees' perspective in the country. The Chief of Public Health section will also visit Zaatari refugee camp.

There is An update of a loan by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to Jordan of 1.2 billion USD connected with some health reforms. We had a fruitful meeting with colleagues from IMF on 22<sup>nd</sup> of January. The colleagues updated us about their mission in Jordan conducted last month which was more of a technical nature according to them. The mission particularly focused on health expenditures, efficiencies, resilience, and healthcare financing structure. The mission will be followed by recommendations. UNHCR will continue to advocate that any reforms or restructuring of the healthcare financing in the country should not impact the refugees' subsidized access to essential care services negatively. The assessment report has been shared by the mission team with MoH.

Gradual disengagement from UNHCR supported health services provision in non-camp/urban settings continued in 2023 in parallel with incremental utilization of public health services by the refugee

population. The number of UNHCR supported Primary Health Care (PHC) clinics in urban areas was reduced to one PHC clinic in 2024. According to the Health Access and Utilization Surveys (HAUS) conducted in 2023, a greater reliance of refugees on public health services was observed compared to the results of the previous year's surveys. Financial barriers were reported to be the major barrier by refugees among others to access health care in 2023.

The Q4 and annual reports of the Health Information System (HIS) are under review and will be shared and uploaded to the UNHCR Syria response portal once the review process is completed. Predominant majority of the morbidity and mortality indicators for the refugee camps in 2023 remained within the acceptable thresholds including the neonatal mortality rate, under 5 mortality rates, and the maternal mortality rate. There were zero maternal mortalities reported from the refugee camps in 2023. Morbidity indicators also remained within the standards and acceptable thresholds in 2023. We highly appreciate the efforts put by all the organizations who are active in the refugee camps for providing the essential services. Main finding of the HIS report for 2023 will be presented in one of the upcoming HSWG meetings in 2024. In addition, the final report on neonatal mortality and stillbirths is also under review process and once finalized, will be shared with the group, and uploaded to the portal. The members of the group are also requested to consider health interventions bringing future health interventions for Azraq camp.

Dr Dina Jardaneh from UNHCR did a presentation on guidance note established for Jordan operation for the cash for health interventions followed by a detailed questions and answers session including different aspects of cash for health programming e.g., cash for NCDs different modalities of cash for health programming and specific context of Jordan. The guidance note was developed in collaboration with agencies implementing cash for health programs in Jordan.

One of the challenges faced by the national health system is the lack of segregated data for refugees accessing the public health facilities resulting in the inability to provide the number of refugees accessing public health system for services. UNHCR has collaborated with MoH and the Public Security Department (PSD) to include segregated data of refugees in the electronic health record system (Hakeem) at the public health facilities. This will allow the MoH to track the number and type of services provided at its facilities to refugees and to estimate the cost of care. Hakeem currently operates at around 20 percent of the MoH centers with a possibility of expansion to the rest of the public health facilities in future. Collaboration between UNHCR and MoH during COVID-19 pandemic for inclusion of refugees' data for vaccination has been a good example in recent past that resulted in segregated data for refugees receiving COVID-19 vaccination. As a result of engagements with Ministry of Interior Affairs, it has been agreed to increase the validity of new asylum seekers certificate to two years from one year. This will apply to Syrian refugees only and the final approval with signatures from the component authority is awaited.

### SRHSWG

UNFPA is aiming this year to involve MoH as co-chair of the SRH Sub Working Group in order to enhance the participation of the national participation in the group. There have been discussions at the camp level with IRC and JHAS for co-chairing the SRH coordination structures in the refugee camps to enhance the capacity and participation of national and international partners involved in the delivery of SRH services in refugee camps. UNFPA is also planning to implement an accreditation program to ensure quality of SRH services and to ensure women friendly services in camp-based facilities and expanding the same

intervention to the MoH facilities near the refugee camps. Woman friendly program is an accreditation program that has been designed as a result of coordination among national Women Healthcare Centre, and HCAC with the support of UNFPA and relevant agencies with a scheme of accreditation for SRH services and clear monitoring activities. We will collaborate with UNHCR this year to ensure that the referral hospitals or the referral network hospitals have more coordination on the camp referrals and that they are aware of the recent assessment report that has been endorsed in December 2023. There will be engagements with the hospital managers through field visits and meetings to enhance the obstetric referrals from the camps. The health coordination structures from camps will be involved in this engagement.

#### MHPSS SWG

The 4Ws exercise that was initiated in December 2023 has been completed and the results were discussed in December SWG meeting. The report is under final stages of review. The report will be shared with the relevant agencies, and we will have a presentation on the exercise in one of the upcoming HSWG meetings.

#### IMC

Activities in IMC's PHC facilities and hospital are underway as per regular plan including the mental health service and nutrition services. The hand over of the PHC facility in Azraq camp village 5 to AMR was completed in December 2023. The challenge of funding pediatric services at Azraq hospital is being faced. In case of not securing the needed funding, IMC is also exploring alternative funding to sustain this essential and critical component of service delivery in the hospital. The current funding is till June 2024. In the event of failure to secure the needed funding, a portion of the pediatric services at the camp hospital will have to be unfortunately discontinued. Alternative venues of service delivery in such scenario must be explored thoroughly and in a timely manner to prevent gap in the delivery of this critical component of service delivery and such situation is feared to lead to increased pediatric morbidities and mortalities.

Another important update is that IMC is facing challenges in procurement of essential medication for the operations due to competing priorities on part of the suppliers due to Gaza situation. Some of the essential medicine including lifesaving medicine are not available in the market. IMC is actively exploring the market to avoid any stock outs of essential medicine in near future.

#### IRC

IRC is continuing the operations at its PHC facility in Zaatari camp through funding from a private donor. A total of 31,700 unique beneficiaries has been served by the PHC facility in the last two years with around 77,000 consultations provided. An interesting analysis done by IRC is that previously 50% of the cases served at the facility were coming from district 5 and 6 while currently 39% are accessing the facility from these districts. The rest of the cases are coming from all over the camp. The facility is serving a cohort of 1,650 NCD cases which is around 39% of the total NCD cases. The facility is also continuing to provide specialized services including pediatric and gynecological and orthopedic services and around 20,000 specialized consultations have been provided.

## CVT

CVT resumed screening for children between the age of 6 and 11 years of age in need of counselling and physiotherapy services. Our office in Abdali is open to receive children (6 to 11 years) in need of the mentioned services.

## CDE

We will have two surgical missions, one for lower limb and one for cardiac cases.

## Humanity and Inclusion

We are expanding our area of intervention. We have been working in northern and middle part of the country and now we are planning our interventions to the southern governorates. We have conducted visits to the Al Tafeeleh and Al Karak hospitals and we are planning to start working in these hospitals soon. For the assisted technology, we are coordinating with the higher rehabilitation committee to conduct a workshop for the north, middle and south PHC facilities to demonstrate how to use the assistive technology.

## ICRC

UNHCR started the exercise of health services mapping. This is a very important exercise, and we will wait to see the results. It will help us to know the presence of different health services in different areas. Response from UNHCR: The exercise is underway with a deadline of 31 of January and will be shared with the members once concluded. A link has been provided this time to provide the feedback instead of excel sheet to make it convenient for the members to provide the requested inputs.

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