



Health Cluster Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, 3 September 2020

Time: 10:00AM – 12:00PM

Venue: WebEx (virtual meeting)

Chair: Dr. Abdelnaser Soboh, Gaza Health Sub-Cluster Coordinator/WHO HoO

Present: AAH, AIDA, Ard Al Insan, Bitona, CISP, CRS, El Wafa Hospital, GCMHP, HI, ICRC, Igatha48, IOCC, Juzzor, JVC, MAP-UK, MDM Spain, MDM Swiss, MoH, MSF Belgium, MSM Spain, Muslim Aid-UK, National Society for Rehabilitation (NSR), OCHA, Oxfam, PCRf, PFBS, PHR, PMRS, PNGO, PRCS, RCS4GS, Taawon, UHCC, UHWC, UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNPD, War Child, WeWorld-GVC, WHO (**total participants 71**).

Meeting Agenda

1. Update on the Health Status in light of COVID 19 spread in Gaza.
2. Operational challenges and urgent needs.
3. The outcome of the Health Cluster HNO workshop and working groups.
4. Partners feedback on challenges to sustain their services.
5. AOB

Meeting Highlights

1. Update on the Health Status in light of COVID 19 spread in Gaza by Dr. Abdullatif Al-Haj, MoH

- A total of 7,351 tests have been conducted since August 24. **The number of active cases has risen to 500** (463 in the community, 37 in the quarantine facilities). All active cases are in the two designated hospitals (Turkish Hospital & European Hospital). Most cases have mild symptoms or are asymptomatic.
- Testing is limited to suspected cases (contacts), except for health workers, who are all tested. For each infected person, there are 6-7 contacts.
- A new machine to extract test samples was received by Qatar, which reduces the required testing time from approx. 5 hours to 2 hours and **enhances the capacity of laboratory tests to around 2,000 per day**.
- MoH's priority is:
 - Testing of health workers, in-patients, contacts and suspected cases
 - Tracing of contacts
 - Treatment of positive cases
- **The capacity of the Turkish Hospital (incl. ICU) is 180 beds and of the EGH is 330 beds (incl. ICU)**. The schools adjacent to the EGH can accommodate another approx. 170 asymptomatic cases. The quarantine centers will also be used for asymptomatic cases and cases with mild symptoms.

Note: The update is as provided during the meeting; the situation is evolving fast. Please also see the latest [COVID-19 Situation Report](#) published by WHO following the meeting.

2. Operational challenges and urgent needs by Dr. Abdullatif Al-Haj, MoH

- There is a need for a continuous supply of **elementary equipment for testing** (particularly swabs).
- Strict measures for protecting the health personnel are very important. **A lot of PPE material is needed**. For instance, it is estimated that for all MoH services, 900,000 surgical masks per month are needed.
- Organizations who want to support in case management are encouraged to **procure and deliver CPAPs instead of ventilators** as CPAPs are available and can be delivered much faster (see action point).
- WHO just delivered 50 *testing* kits and 4,000 swabs to MoH, which will help screen more than 4,900 people to help scaling up testing and contain the ongoing outbreak of COVID-19 within the community. On Sunday, a shipment by UNICEF will arrive with of 4,000 testing kits and 50,000 masks. More shipments are expected with consumables for COVID-19 in the coming days. **Partners are requested to inform MoH/Health Cluster regarding items in the pipeline to allow for better planning and needs identification** (see action point).

Actions	By who	When / status
Deliver CPAPs instead of ventilators	Health Cluster partners involved in Case Management Support	Asap
Inform MoH/Health Cluster about items in the pipeline	All Health Cluster partners	Asap

3. The outcome of the Health Cluster HNO workshop and working groups by Dr. Abdelnaser Soboh

- See attached [presentation](#).

4. Partners feedback on challenges to sustain their services

- Partners reported increasing challenges to support MoH with the **referral/transfer of patients**. The response time for urgent cases is increasing because authorities are closing off streets.
- Lack of PPE is a critical gap** (see above). Organizations who bring in PPEs are encouraged to share them with partners.
- The distribution of hygiene material in the communities is a challenge due to the movement restrictions.
- Health Cluster Coordinator informed that the COVID-19 Response Plan was updated and critical response gaps highlighted. Existing needs may also be addressed through the upcoming allocation of the Humanitarian Fund.
- Many partners highlighted challenges in sustaining services related to chronic issues such as SRH (high-risk pregnancy, breastfeeding etc.) and non-communicable diseases (cancer patients, people with diabetes etc.).
- Laboratory services can currently not be performed** as per MoH's instructions to all PHC centers. There is a need for laboratory services and other services in the hospitals. Dr. Al-Haj will flag this issue to the coordination committee.
- Access to information equals access to services. **There is not enough information about which services are available**. Due to overload of the MoH hotline, this is a critical gap. **The Health Cluster encourages partners to support on this issue**. To address this, the Health Cluster also encourages MoH to include in the daily media briefing a short information about available services.
- Partners with services for Persons with Disabilities are kindly requested to contact the Chair of the Disability Working Group, Mr. Jamal Al Rozzi: executive.director@gnsr.org

Actions	By who	When / status
Enhance access to information about available services	MoH/Health Cluster partners	Asap

5. AOB

- Ms. Chipo Takawira, WHO, has been appointed as new oPt Health Cluster Coordinator. She is based in Jerusalem and can be reached under ctakawira@who.int

For further information, please contact:

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