

WHO BAHRAIN NEWSLETTER



Image
Children at the Food Based Dietary Guidelines Exhibition



**World Health
Organization**

Bahrain



VISIT WHO
BAHRAIN



This Edition

JANUARY - JUNE 2024 | VOL 3

ii CONTENT

02 Message from the WHO Representative in Bahrain

03 WHO Regional Director in the Eastern Mediterranean

Appointment of Regional Director, Dr Hanan Balkhy, and Farewell to Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari

04 19th Programme Subcommittee Meeting

Preparations for the 71st Session of the Regional Committee Kick-Off in Cairo

05 WHO Bahrain and Arabian Gulf University Unite for Youth Engagement in Universal Health Coverage

06 Antimicrobial Resistance

University of Bahrain Students Shine in Regional Competition on AMR

07 Strengthening Bahrain's Flu Fight

08 WHO Provides Technical Guidance on the Joint External Evaluation of the International Health Regulations (2005)

09 WHO Bahrain Joins Hands with Northern Governorate to Take on Vector-borne Diseases

10 Bahrain Hosts WHO Regional Training on Web-based Polio Surveillance Platform

11 National Public Health Laboratory Completes WHO Shipping Infectious Substances Course

11 Bangladesh Embassy Organizes an Awareness-Raising Mobile Consular Camp

13 Healthy Cities Programme

Capital Governorate Celebrates Gulf Healthy Cities Day
Capital Governorate Self-Assessment

14 Health-Promoting Universities

The AUBH Takes Significant Steps to Become a Health-Promoting University



15 Food-Based Dietary Guidelines Exhibition

The Art of Eating Well: Bahraini Experts Share Tips and Tricks at Food-based Dietary Guidelines Exhibition

16 WHO75 Champion Ruba Al Omari

WHO Bahrain Celebrates Ruba Al Omari's Inspiring Journey

17 Celebrating Bahrain Sports Day

WHO Bahrain Joins Forces to Promote Physical Activity

Northern Governorate Marks Bahrain Sports Day

Walking in History: WHO Team Takes a Stroll for Bahrain Sports Day

19 World No Tobacco Day

Bahrain marks World No Tobacco Day

22 Bahrain's Students Win Regional Competition to Mark World No Tobacco Day

24 Global Health Days

World Immunization Week
World Blood Donor Day
World Hearing Day
World Health Day
World Environment Day
International Day of Nurses and Midwives

29 World Health Assembly

Bahrain Participates in the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly

30 UNCT Launches New Cooperation Framework for 2025–2029

32 Ministry of Sustainable Development Boosts Statistical Capacity with WHO Support

33 WHO Bahrain Advances Health for All

35 Thank you! From the WHO Bahrain Country Office Team



A close-up, top-down view of a person's hands shaping a piece of light-colored clay on a pottery wheel. The person is wearing a blue t-shirt and dark sandals. The background is a textured, light-colored surface, possibly a workshop floor. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image, with a blue vertical bar to its left.

**We promote health
and well-being by
leading strategic
programmes**



Message from the WHO Representative in Bahrain

I am pleased to present our third edition of WHO Bahrain's newsletter. This newsletter offers a few highlights of the progress we have made between January and June 2024 towards meeting the triple billion targets of the WHO Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 (GPW 13) and the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We commenced this year on a great note. For the first of the “triple billion” targets on achieving universal health coverage (UHC), we engaged and partnered with university students and youth from across the country to foster their meaningful engagement in addressing global health priorities and achieving Health for All. In keeping with the flagship initiative of the WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean on investing in a resilient and sustainable health workforce, which I am honoured to be co-leading, we also celebrated the vital work that nurses and midwives do to save lives and keep our communities safe.

At the same time, we have exerted extensive efforts to strengthen emergency prevention, preparedness and response capacities. Key initiatives included, among many other things, providing technical support on completing the self-evaluation phase of the Joint External Evaluation (JEE) of the International Health Regulations (2005) capacities. Work in this area also included leading a country mission to support Government efforts in strengthening the national seasonal influenza vaccination programme.

For the third of the “triple billion” targets—to see 1 billion more people enjoy better health and well-being—we kept our work centred on boosting the implementation of “best buys” to tackle noncommunicable diseases such as promoting healthy diets and physical activity. In addition, we worked to improve health in urban settings by supporting the implementation of the Healthy Cities and Health-Promoting Universities initiatives across the country.

As we approach the end of the GPW 13, we must recognize the milestones we have reached to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable. But there is still more to be done to achieve our shared vision of health for all, and the only way ahead is to work together. With your dedicated support, we will keep the promise of the highest level of health and well-being for everyone.

Dr Tasnim Atatrah
WHO Representative in Bahrain



**Promoting health and well-being
through diplomacy and strategic health
programmes creates the conditions to
achieve health for all.**

Dr Tasnim Atatrah
WHO Representative in Bahrain



Dr Hanan Balkhy Appointed as WHO Regional Director for the EMR



23 JANUARY 2024
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

[Read more
on RD's
appointment
here](#)

Dr Hanan Balkhy was appointed WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean by the WHO Executive Board in January 2024. She took office on 1 February 2024 for a five-year term.

Dr Balkhy has set 5 priorities for her tenure as Regional Director: make health care more accessible to all, especially hard-to-reach populations; expand country capacities to tackle emergency health demands of the climate crisis, pandemics, conflicts and other disasters; strengthen public health for disease prevention and health promotion; expand partnerships for financing, and to share knowledge and skills; and strengthen WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and country office capacities to boost cooperation and better influence global health. She is the first woman to become WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean.

Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari Appointed as WHO Director Emeritus for the Eastern Mediterranean



WHO Bahrain bids farewell to Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, the previous Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean.

Dr Al-Mandhari was appointed as WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean by the WHO Executive Board at its 143rd session and assumed office from 1 June 2018 to 31 January 2024. His legacy was to realize a vision of Health for All by All in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

During the 70th session of the Regional Committee, Dr Al-Mandhari was nominated as an Emeritus Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Region.



19th Programme Subcommittee Meeting



Preparations for the 71st Session of the Regional Committee Kick-Off in Cairo

6-7 MARCH 2024 CAIRO, EGYPT

The Programme Subcommittee of the Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean held its nineteenth meeting at the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean. The meeting provided a platform to present and discuss the proposed agenda items for the 71st session of the Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean, which is planned to take place in October 2024 in Doha, Qatar. It also discussed important matters related to the Member States' representation in global and regional governing body meetings.

The meeting brought together experts nominated by Member States to serve as members of the Programme Subcommittee for two years and WHO staff. The current members are from Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia. Bahrain was represented at the meeting by Dr Samya Ali Bahram, Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health, who worked together with other experts from the Region to ensure that the 71st session of the Regional Committee achieves its desired outcome through impactful resolutions.



WHO Bahrain and Arabian Gulf University Unite for Youth Engagement in Universal Health Coverage



WHO Bahrain reaffirmed its commitment to fostering meaningful youth engagement by organizing a panel discussion on the role of young people as active participants in achieving universal health coverage (UHC). The Arabian Gulf University (AGU), one of Bahrain's five WHO health-promoting universities, hosted the panel discussion, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Affairs (MYA).

H.E. Dr Saad bin Saud Al Fuhaid, AGU President, and Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, inaugurated the event. H.E. Dr Al Fuhaid emphasized the importance of involving young people in decisions that impact their health to achieve sustainable development. Dr Atatrah echoed these sentiments, underlining that youths' voices are crucial in building resilient health systems that respond to everyone's needs.

Moderated by AGU student, Mr Mohammed Al Qahtani, the panel discussion involved diverse experts, including Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative; Professor Mohamed Shehata, Head of the Family and Community Medicine Department at AGU; Ms Shaikha Butti, Acting Director of Youth Enabling Directorate at MYA; Mr Marwan Obaid, Youth Representative from the AGU; and Dr Dana Maki, Senior Lecturer in Physiotherapy at Brunel University London. More than 30 students attended the event, sharing their innovative ideas towards achieving UHC for all people.

6 MAY 2024
MANAMA, BAHRAIN





Antimicrobial Resistance

University of Bahrain Students Shine in Regional Competition

WHO Bahrain hosted the University of Bahrain's winning students in the competition held by the WHO Regional Office on "Tackling the misuse and overuse of antibiotics in the Eastern Mediterranean Region" to recognize their extraordinary contributions. During their visit, Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, emphasized the critical role which young health professionals play in preserving the efficacy of current antibiotics, praising the winning students for acting as change agents for better prescribing behaviour.

The regional competition was launched in September 2023 in the lead-up to World AMR Awareness Week to encourage the use of the recently published WHO AWaRe Antibiotic Book, which provides health workers with advice on appropriate antibiotic prescribing and dispensing. It targeted university students and young health professionals, requiring those participating either to film a short video to compete regionally (track one) or create a campaign proposal to compete nationally (track two). The competition attracted large-scale engagement in the Region, with 83 submissions received from 13 countries.

The Regional Office held an online winners' announcement ceremony on 15 January 2024 to name and celebrate the winners. Nursing students from the University of Bahrain's College of Health and Sport Sciences were among the four winners chosen for track one, tying for third place. As for track two, the University of Bahrain pharmacists were among the eight winners selected from different countries in the Region for the chance to receive an award of up to US\$ 1000 to support the implementation of their proposals in 2024.

Bahrain Enrolls in GLASS Antimicrobial Usage in 2024



Bahrain enrolls in the Global Antimicrobial Resistance and Use Surveillance System (GLASS) component on antimicrobial usage (AMU). GLASS-AMU provides a common and standardized set of methods for measuring and reporting antimicrobial usage at country level.

Data on AMU provide a basis for countries to understand the patterns and amount of antimicrobials used nationally to create appropriate policies, regulations and interventions for the optimal use of antimicrobials.

Strengthening Bahrain's Flu Fight



Under the direction of the Ministry of Health, the Country Office organized a two-day mission to pilot a rapid mini-evaluation of Bahrain's seasonal influenza vaccination programme. This was arranged as part of the technical support provided by WHO to countries in the Region to strengthen their national seasonal influenza vaccination programmes in line with the Immunization Agenda 2030: A Global Strategy to Leave No One Behind.

The WHO mission team included experts from the Country Office, the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Partnership for International Vaccine Initiatives. The mission team held discussions with technical focal points from the Expanded Programme on Immunization, and the members of the National Immunization Technical Advisory Group to assess the performance of Bahrain's seasonal influenza vaccination and life-course immunization programme and identify areas for improvement. They also met with a wide range of non-clinical staff to gain insights on issues such as vaccine supply, training needs, and service delivery mechanisms.



23-24 JANUARY 2024, MANAMA, BAHRAIN

Among the key highlights of the mission was a field visit to the Shaikh Abdulla bin Khalid Al Khalifa Health Centre. This visit was a vital component of the mini-evaluation process, allowing the mission team to closely observe and understand the operations, infrastructure, and resources available at the primary health care level.

The mission concluded with a debriefing to the Ministry of Health, where recommendations were shared for improving the seasonal influenza vaccination programme and strengthening national pandemic preparedness in Bahrain.

WHO Provides Technical Guidance on the **Joint External Evaluation of the International Health Regulations (2005)**



11-15 FEBRUARY 2024, MANAMA, BAHRAIN

To support the Ministry of Health's efforts to complete the second round of Joint External Evaluation (JEE) of the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR) capacities, WHO Bahrain organized a five-day mission led by Dr Mahgoub Hamid, Technical Officer in the WHO Health Emergencies Programme, WHO Regional Office. The mission aimed to finalize the self-evaluation report to initiate the second phase of the JEE, the external evaluation.

During the mission, Dr Hamid guided the Public Health Directorate's team in completing the JEE country evaluation tool to assess prevention,

detection and response capacities. The mission concluded with a debriefing to the Ministry of Health, during which the mission's progress was reviewed and the next steps for starting the external evaluation phase were explored.

The Ministry of Health initiated the second round of the JEE in September 2023, after completing the first in 2016. The JEE is part of the IHR Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. It is a voluntary, multisectoral process to assess the country's capacity to prevent, detect, and rapidly respond to public health risks. The process of JEE includes a self-evaluation conducted by the country using the JEE tool, followed by an external evaluation conducted by a multisectoral team of experts, in close collaboration with national authorities.

WHO Bahrain Joins Hands with Northern Governorate to Take on Vector-Borne Diseases



WHO Bahrain participated in the mosquito control campaign launched by H.E. Mr Ali bin Sheikh Abdulhussein Al-Asfour, Governor of the Northern Governorate, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health.

With the motto “Mosquito control is the responsibility of everyone and by everyone”, the campaign called on individuals, families and communities to join in the battle to reduce mosquito breeding sites and combat vector-borne diseases. This is part of the Northern Governorate’s efforts to organize community action for health development towards being recognized as a Healthy Governorate.

The campaign involved local and national authorities, such as the Northern Municipal Council, the Northern Area Municipality, the Supreme Council for Environment, and the Ministries of Works, and Municipal Affairs and Agriculture, as well as the private sector, civic groups and grassroots organizations. It included visits to mosquito breeding sites and awareness-raising activities to increase community participation in mosquito control efforts.



4 JUNE 2024
NORTHERN GOVERNORATE, BAHRAIN



Bahrain Hosts WHO Regional Training on Web-based Polio Surveillance Platform



I wish to express my sincere thanks to the Government of Bahrain for hosting this training and would also like to thank the WHO team in the country for their invaluable support...



Dr Hanan Balkhy
Regional Director for
Eastern Mediterranean
Region



The WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, in collaboration with WHO Bahrain and the Ministry of Health, organized the Web Information for Action (Web-IFA) Roll Out and Use of Dashboard Training - Group (A). The training aimed to train national polio/Expanded Programmes on Immunization (EPI) Data Managers in the Region on the global surveillance guidelines and introduce the Web-IFA – a web-based information and data management platform that links laboratory data and field data in one location– in line with the Global Polio Surveillance Action Plan 2022-2024.

H.E. Dr Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health, Dr Hanan Balkhy, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, and Dr Tasnim Atarah, WHO Representative, inaugurated the training. In her speech, H.E. the Minister praised the level of cooperation of WHO with countries in the Region to strengthen epidemiological surveillance to detect disease outbreaks quickly before they spread, cost lives and become difficult to control. Furthermore, Dr Atarah recognized Bahrain's remarkable efforts in eradicating and staying polio-free for more than 30 years.

The training brought together polio/EPI Data Managers from 9 countries in the Region, namely Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia. Over the course of five days, the participants were introduced to new surveillance strategies, tools and standards in view of the Global Polio Surveillance Action Plan 2022-2024. Best country practices for moving to electronic data collection were also exchanged towards increasing efficiency in collecting, managing and using data for action.

**18-22 FEBRUARY 2024
MANAMA, BAHRAIN**



National Public Health Laboratory Experts Complete WHO Shipping Infectious Substances Course



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, received five Ministry of Health staff from the National Public Health Laboratory who completed the Infectious Substances Shipping Training to congratulate and hand them their certificates. This training provides shippers of infectious substances with the appropriate knowledge of international travel regulations related to the classification, documentation, marking, labelling, packaging, and preparation of shipments. Training in this area contributes to ensuring the safety of staff, the public and the environment. To remain valid, re-certification is required every two years.

Bangladesh Embassy Organizes an Awareness-Raising Mobile Consular Camp



26 APRIL 2024, MUHARRAQ, BAHRAIN

WHO Bahrain participated in an awareness-raising seminar organized by the Bangladesh Embassy at Al Eslah Society Hall. It aimed to inform Bangladeshi expatriates about workers' rights, workplace safety, and available social and health services.

Inaugurated by Mr A.K.M. Mohiuddin Kayes, the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Embassy of Bangladesh, the event saw the presence of Government officials, United Nations representatives and the wider Bangladeshi community. During the seminar, WHO presented on the different initiatives and activities carried out by WHO Bahrain to promote the health rights of migrant workers and ensure their access to quality health services.

The seminar kicked off a mobile consular service camp, organized by the Embassy, to provide Bangladeshi expatriates with easy access to consular and welfare services, including passport services, birth registration, and free medical consultations.



29 FEBRUARY 2024
MANAMA, BAHRAIN

Healthy Cities Programme

Capital Governorate Celebrates Gulf Healthy Cities Day

Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, joined the awareness-raising event organized by the Capital Governorate in the Sitra Walk to mark the Gulf Healthy Cities Day (1 March). Inaugurated by H.E. Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulrahman bin Rashid Al Khalifa, Capital Governor, the event showcased the Governorate's commitment to creating healthy and sustainable environments towards its designation as a Healthy Governorate.

The community, Government officials, and health advocates showed up in huge numbers for the event. It featured many pop-up stalls where information was disseminated on healthy eating and good mental health habits, and free medical examinations were provided to the public. An awareness-raising exhibition on tobacco control was also organized as part of the event in coordination with the Ministry of Interior's Health and Social Affairs Department.

Capital Governorate Self Assessment

19 MAY 2024
MANAMA, BAHRAIN

A technical team from the Ministry of Health and WHO Bahrain visited the Capital Governorate Office to provide guidance on completing the self-assessment to be recognized as a Healthy Governorate.

This visit builds on the formal letter of collaboration between WHO Bahrain and the Capital Governorate, signed on 24 July 2023, to provide a framework for increased cooperation in expanding the implementation of the Healthy Cities Programme beyond individual cities to the entirety of the Governorate.



During the visit, the technical team reviewed the Capital Governorate's progress across 80 indicators. Once the Capital Governorate completes the self-assessment, a team of WHO experts will conduct an in-country evaluation to assess its eligibility to be recognized as a Healthy Governorate.



Health-Promoting Universities

22 MAY 2024, RIFFA, BAHRAIN

AUBH Takes Significant Steps to Become a Health-Promoting University

A technical delegation from WHO Bahrain and the Ministry of Health visited the American University of Bahrain (AUBH). The delegation offered technical support in completing the self-assessment to be recognized as a Health-Promoting University and discussed the AUBH's ongoing efforts to create health-conducive working and learning environments for academic staff, students, workers, and alumni.

In addition, they toured the AUBH's facilities and interacted with staff and students to gain insights into the programmes and services provided.

Upon completing the self-assessment, a WHO team of experts, in close coordination with the Ministry of Health and the Higher Education Council, will conduct an in-country evaluation of the university.

Once recognized as a Health-Promoting University, the AUBH will join the ranks of five other universities in Bahrain recognized in 2023: Ahlia University, Arabian Gulf University, Kingdom University, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland—Medical University of Bahrain, and University of Technology Bahrain.



Food-Based Dietary Guidelines Exhibition



The Art of Eating Well: Bahraini Experts Share Tips and Tricks at Food-Based Dietary Guidelines Exhibition

FEBRUARY - JUNE 2024
MANAMA, BAHRAIN

WHO Bahrain participated in a series of healthy eating sessions organized by the Ministry of Health in conjunction with the food-based dietary guidelines sustainable exhibition. Bahraini public figures and health champions facilitated the sessions, interacting with community members of various ages, including school students, on a variety of food and nutrition-related subjects. They also shared healthy dietary practices and actionable eating strategies. At the end of the sessions, attendees were invited to visit the exhibition.

The exhibition was first held in December 2023 at Seef Mall in Manama by WHO Bahrain and the Ministry of Health. Then, it moved to the Ministry of Health's premises and remained there until June 2024.



WHO 75 Champion Ruba Al Omari

WHO Bahrain Celebrates Ruba Al Omari's Inspiring Journey

[Watch
Ruba's video
here](#)

Ms Ruba Al Omari is among three Bahraini health champions selected by WHO Bahrain as part of WHO's 75th-anniversary campaign. WHO Bahrain engages with the WHO75 champions to raise awareness about public health challenges in the Region, inspire positive change and mobilize action towards better health and well-being for all.

The WHO Bahrain team met with Ms Al Omari at Bahrain Fort to celebrate her remarkable achievements at the 12th Sharjah International Open Para Athletics Meeting, which was held between 4 and 6 February 2024. In her athletic career, Ms Al

Omari has garnered more than 26 championships in the Tokyo Olympics, World Discus Throw, Gulf Leagues, and West Asian Championship, among others.

On the occasion of Bahrain Sports Day, WHO Bahrain launched a social media campaign to promote healthy lifestyles and physical activity. It featured a video of the prominent para-athlete Ms Ruba Al Omari that utilized positive messages on increasing physical activity and staying active that appealed to youth. The campaign also included a series of awareness-raising posts on the benefits of physical activity for health and mental well-being.

Read more about [WHO Bahrain's initiatives](#) on strengthening the inclusion of persons with disabilities



29 FEBRUARY 2024, MANAMA, BAHRAIN



Celebrating Bahrain Sports Day

WHO Bahrain Joins Forces to Promote Physical Activity



19 FEBRUARY 2024
MANAMA, BAHRAIN

In commemoration of Bahrain Sports Day (22 February), WHO Bahrain joined hands with partners and engaged with the broader community to raise awareness of the benefits of physical activity for health and human development.

The WHO Bahrain team joined the "Let's Walk" initiative launched by the Ministry of Health to encourage people from all across the country to walk for 30 minutes in 30 parks and walkways in conjunction with Bahrain Sports Day. The initiative was organized from 18 to 29 February 2024 in coordination with the Ministries of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture, Social Development, and Youth Affairs. Government officials, youth associations and clubs and the general public all participated in the initiative.



22 February 2024

The Country Office participated in a sports event held by the Ministry of Health and Primary Healthcare Centres. The event aimed to raise awareness of the significant benefits of physical activity for hearts, bodies and minds, and encourage staff participation in sports activities. It saw the active engagement of H.E. Dr. Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health, and other senior officials. Hosted within the Ministry of Health's premises, the event featured several sports activities, a wellness check station, and an exhibition on healthy eating habits.



MANAMA, BAHRAIN



Northern Governorate Marks Bahrain Sports Day



Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, took part in the A'ali Walk organised by the Northern Governorate to mark Bahrain Sports Day. With a message of Health for All by All, the event is part of the Governorate's initiatives to organize the community around making physical activity a priority for all. It was inaugurated by H.E. Mr Ali bin Sheikh Abdulhussein Al-Asfour, Governor of Northern Governorate. The event brought together Government officials, United Nations representatives, health champions, and the community, and featured activities like a walkathon and football tournament.

Walking in History: WHO Team Takes a Stroll for Bahrain Sports Day

 22 February 2024

A physically active lifestyle is proven to reduce the risk of noncommunicable diseases, protect against risk factors like hypertension, overweight, and obesity, and improve mental health. Joining the festive celebrations of Bahrain Sports Day, the Country Office team enjoyed a walk around Bahrain Fort as a wellness activity to boost their mental and physical well-being.



KARBABAD, BAHRAIN

World No Tobacco Day

WHO Bahrain Rallies for Youth Protection from Tobacco Industry Interference



[Access the report here](#)

Bahrain's Progress on Tobacco Control under the Spotlight

6 FEBRUARY 2024

In conjunction with the Tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), the Canadian Cancer Society released its eighth edition of Cigarette Package Health Warnings: International Status Report. The report ranks 211 countries and territories on the size of their health warnings on cigarette packages and lists the 138 countries and territories that now require graphic picture warnings. WHO Bahrain contributed to the international report by compiling up-to-date evidence on the country's current tobacco health warning legislation and the ongoing national efforts towards creating a tobacco-free generation.

WHO and Royal Humanitarian Foundation Youth Awareness Workshop

18 MAY 2024

WHO Bahrain, in collaboration with the Royal Humanitarian Foundation, organized a workshop to raise youth's awareness about the harmful and deadly effects of tobacco use and the tobacco industry's tactics to promote the uptake of its products. Nine young people aged 13-17 years attended the event. The workshop included a video production and editing session to build young people's capacities to develop engaging and effective video content for social media, encouraging their participation in the One Voice video campaign held by the WHO Regional Office to mark World No Tobacco Day 2024.



WHO and Ministry of Interior World No Tobacco Day Joint Event

26 MAY 2024

The Country Office delivered a lecture to the Ministry of Interior staff on the FCTC in preparation for World No Tobacco Day. The lecture brought together more than 30 staff from the Ministry's different directorates. It also presented an opportunity for a meeting between Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, and Dr Latifa Al-Jamea, Director of the Health and Social Affairs Department at the Ministry of Interior, to discuss national efforts to combat tobacco use and explore areas for collaboration.

A tour of the Ministry's health facilities was conducted at the conclusion of the lecture, where the WHO Bahrain delegation was briefed on the different services provided for staff, including tobacco cessation services.





WHO Participates in Ministry of Interior World No Tobacco Day Event

30 MAY 2024

WHO Bahrain attended the World No Tobacco Day celebration organised by the Ministry of Interior in the Public Security Officers Club. The event underscored the need to prevent future generations from falling prey to the harmful impact of tobacco use, showcasing the Ministry of Interior's efforts through its various community partnerships. Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, delivered a keynote address at the event's opening ceremony, emphasizing WHO's commitment to supporting the Government of Bahrain in implementing effective tobacco control measures to protect young people.

WHO Participates in Ministry of Health Exhibition

13 JUNE 2024

WHO Bahrain participated in an exhibition organized by the Ministry of Health at Ramli Mall to mark World No Tobacco Day. The exhibition aimed to encourage health-conscious behaviour and raise public awareness of the harm caused by tobacco products to people, public health, and the environment. It featured 12 stations that provided information on the harmful effects of tobacco use, animated videos on healthy lifestyle choices, and interactive games. The exhibition attracted participation from the community at large.



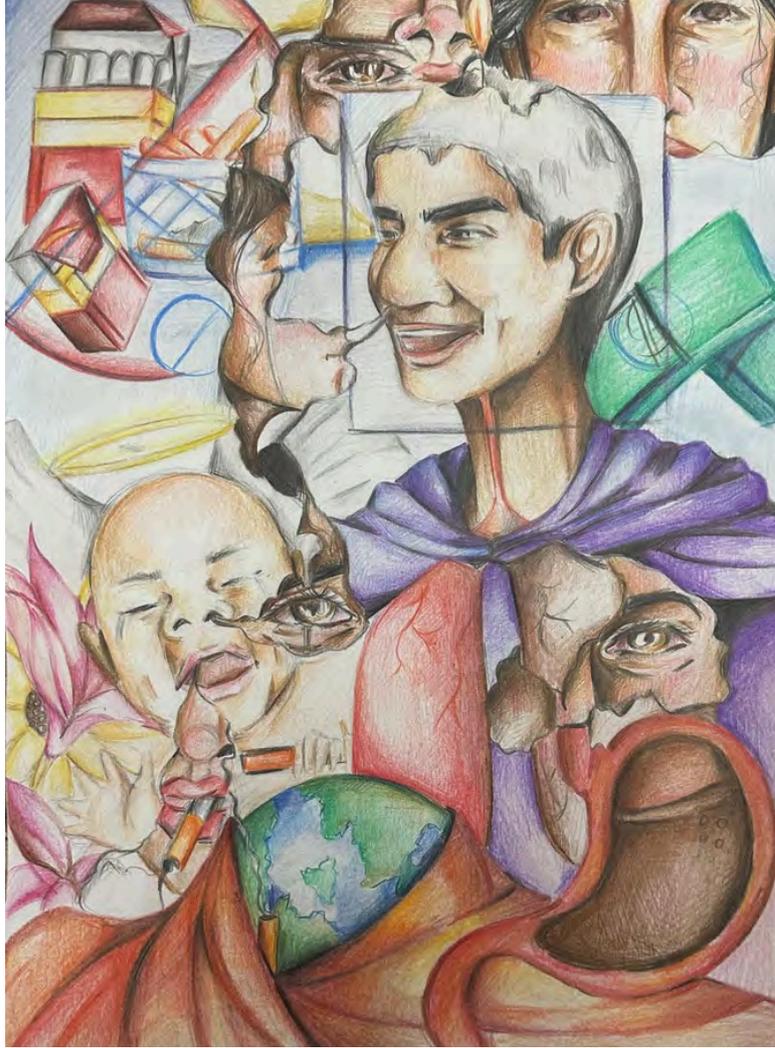
Bahrain Receives World No Tobacco Day Award 2024

11 JUNE 2024

Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, presented Mr Husain Ali Alrayes, Health Inspection Supervisor, in the Ministry of Health, with the 2024 World No Tobacco Day award, in the attendance of H.E. Dr Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health.

This award recognizes the outstanding contributions of exceptional individuals and organizations to tobacco control across WHO's six regions. Mr Alrayes is among 31 tobacco-free champions worldwide and one of five in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean region to receive the 2024 honours. The National Committee to Control Smoking and All Types and Products of Tobacco in Bahrain was previously the recipient of this award in 2022.







Bahrain's Students Win Regional Competition to Mark World No Tobacco Day

WHO Bahrain hosted a celebratory event to honour the winning school students in the art competition held by the WHO Regional Office to commemorate World No Tobacco Day 2024 and amplify children's and young people's voices in the fight against the tobacco epidemic. They are Adhuna Banerjee, Mathumitha Natarajan, Praveen Jan, and Sami Ourdjini. During the event, Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, commended the winners' imagination and creative skills, emphasizing the importance of engaging children and youth in World No Tobacco Day. The four students were awarded certificates of merit and in-kind prizes.



Humanly Possible: Immunization for All

World Immunization Week, celebrated in the last week of April, aims to raise awareness of the collective action needed to promote the use of vaccines to protect people of all ages against disease.

The World Immunization Week this year celebrated 50 years of the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) – recognizing the collective efforts to save and improve countless lives from vaccine-preventable diseases and strengthen immunization programmes to protect the next generations.

31 MARCH 2024
MANAMA, BAHRAIN



50 Years of the Expanded Immunization Programme | A Look through the Ministry of Health Archives



A person wearing a yellow protective suit and gloves is handling blood bags in a refrigerator. The refrigerator has several shelves with blood bags and labels that read "X-MATCHED NEONATAL".

WHO Delegation Visits Bahrain's Central Blood Bank ahead of **World Blood Donor Day**

11 June 2024, Manama, Bahrain

In the lead-up to World Blood Donor Day (14 June), a WHO Bahrain delegation, led by Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, conducted a field visit to the Central Blood Bank at Salmaniya Medical Complex. During the visit, Dr Atatrah met with Dr Maryam Athbi Al Jalahma, CEO of Government Hospitals, to discuss national efforts to ensure timely access to safe and sufficient supplies of blood and blood products and explore potential joint initiatives to mark the World Patient Safety Day 2024.

The WHO Bahrain delegation also toured the Central Blood Bank, where they were briefed on the blood transfusion services and the utilized technologies and innovations to support blood collection, testing, processing, storage and distribution. Information was also provided on the planned activities by the Central Blood Bank in commemoration of World Blood Donor Day to thank the community for its life-saving donations and promote a culture of regular blood donation.



World Hearing Day

Watch the
hearWHO
video
here



WHO Bahrain Ignites Awareness on World Hearing Day with AGU

**5 MARCH 2024
MANAMA, BAHRAIN**

Hearing loss affects more than 1.5 billion people worldwide. Stigma often prevents people with hearing loss from accessing the care, services and products they need. On the occasion of World Hearing Day (3 March), WHO Bahrain organized an awareness-raising

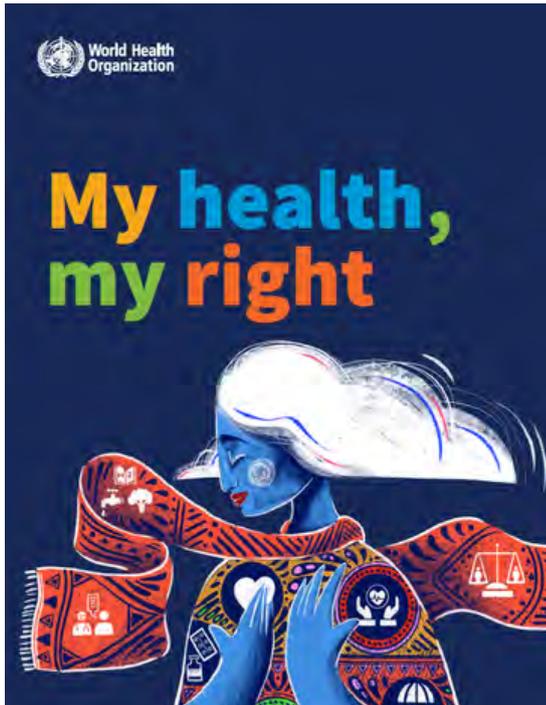
event in collaboration with the Arabian Gulf University (AGU) —one of the five WHO health-promoting universities in Bahrain— to draw public attention to ear and hearing care and the importance of hearing loss prevention.

H.E. Dr Saad bin Saud Al Fuhaid, President of AGU; Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative; and Professor Abdelhalim Deifalla, Dean of Medicine and Medical Sciences College at AGU, were among the key participants in the event. It attracted large-scale participation of university students, academic staff, ENT specialists, and family physicians.

The event featured pop-up stalls where students received educational brochures on healthy ears and safe listening, and ENT specialists demonstrated the medical devices used in auditory examinations to promote routine hearing screenings. Other activities at the event included having AGU students proficient in sign language illustrate basic expressions to meet and greet people and join in on conversations to foster inclusivity and engagement with persons living with hearing loss. Students and academic staff were also encouraged to use the hearWHO app— a software application that gives the general public access to a hearing screener to check their hearing status and monitor it over time.



Check your hearing!



World Health Day

My health, my right

**7 APRIL 2024
MANAMA, BAHRAIN**

Watch
WHO's
video [here](#)

The theme for this year's World Health Day (7 April) is "my health, my right". This theme was chosen to champion the right of everyone, everywhere, to have access to quality health services, education, and information, as well as safe drinking water, clean air, good nutrition, quality housing, decent working and environmental conditions, and freedom from discrimination.

WHO Bahrain joined the community in marking World Health Day, highlighting the importance of health as the cornerstone for the improvement of human development.

World Environment Day

**25 JUNE 2024,
MANAMA, BAHRAIN**

#GenerationRestoration



World Environment Day (5 June) is the largest global campaign to raise awareness and take action on the planet's most pressing environmental problems. This year, World Environment Day focused on land restoration, halting desertification and building drought resilience. Joining the global campaign, the WHO Bahrain team arranged a wellness event where they planted seeds, inviting the community at large to follow suit for greener and more sustainable futures.

Also, WHO Bahrain collaborated with the WHO75 champion and artist Abbas Al-Mosawi on an advocacy video to raise community awareness of the impact of climate change on health and well-being.





Nurses are the backbone of health systems and key to the achievement of universal health coverage... it's our role to invest in them as part of our commitment to health for all.



Dr. Tasnim Atatrah
WHO Representative in Bahrain



International Day for Nurses and Midwives

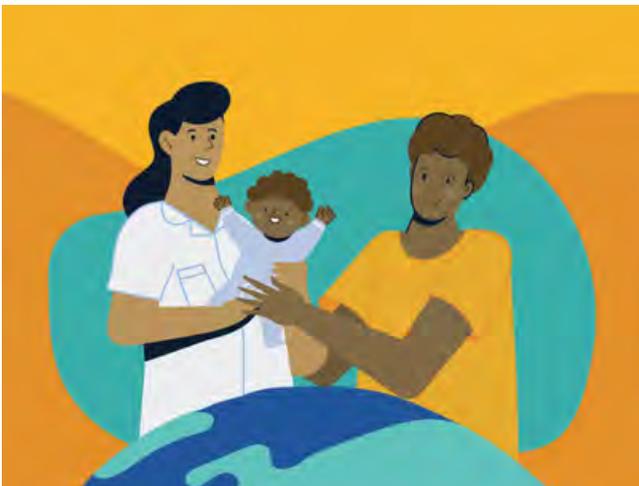
Celebrating Unwavering Dedication

5 MAY 2024
MANAMA, BAHRAIN

In celebration of the International Day of the Midwife (5 May) and International Nurses Day (12 May), WHO Bahrain launched a social media campaign in collaboration with the University of Bahrain and Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) – Medical University of Bahrain.

The campaign included video testimonials from nursing and midwifery students from the University of Bahrain, sharing their stories, inspirations and unwavering commitment to providing healthcare services.

It also featured quotes from WHO Bahrain and RCSI – Medical University of Bahrain, on the crucial role of nurses and midwives as the backbone of health systems.



We take pride in equipping our nursing students with world-class education and diverse clinical experiences at our partner hospitals, helping them make a positive impact on the lives of their patients.



Professor Sameer Otoom
President of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) Medical University of Bahrain



World Health Assembly

Bahrain Participates in the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly



27 MAY- 1 JUNE 2024
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

Ministers of health and other decision-makers from WHO's 194 Member States convened for the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly, the annual meeting of the WHO's decision-making body. Held under the theme "All for Health, Health for All", the World Health Assembly included deliberations on global health priorities such as enhancing pandemic preparedness, addressing climate change health impact, and increasing access to UHC. A major highlight has been the adoption of the WHO Fourteenth General Programme of Work, 2025–2028 (GPW 14), towards building resilient and future-ready health systems.

During the World Health Assembly, H.E. Dr. Jaleela bint AlSayed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health, delivered a statement affirming the Region's commitment to ensuring the highest attainable standard of health for all. She also highlighted the Region's collaborative efforts with various partners to achieve UHC, prepare for health emergencies and address social determinants of health, in line with the SDGs and the strategic priorities set by WHO.

WHO 14th General Programme of Work

WHO Bahrain Unveils GPW 14 with Ministry of Health

30 JUNE 2024
MANAMA, BAHRAIN



WHO Bahrain hosted a virtual consultative meeting with the Ministry of Health to guide the completion of the country prioritization exercise for the GPW14. In this exercise, countries in the Region are prompted to prioritize outcomes and related outputs of the GPW14 based on their national health needs and priorities. This meeting is part of the broader participatory planning process for the GPW14, recently adopted at the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly.

The results of the country prioritization exercise will be shared during the 71st session of the Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean to guide the development of the WHO Regional Strategic Operational Plan 2024 – 2028.



UNCT Launches New Cooperation Framework for 2025–2029: A Collaborative Approach Unfolds



Under the overall direction of the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) is developing a new Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2025–2029. Among the key activities undertaken from January to June 2024 were organizing a strategic prioritization workshop with the Government, formulating a theory of change that describes the interdependent changes necessary for the country to achieve the 2030 Agenda, and hosting a series of consultative meetings with non-state actors to ensure a collaborative approach to the development of the UNSDCF 2025–2029.

24 JANUARY 2024, MANAMA BAHRAIN

A strategic prioritization workshop was jointly organized by the Government of Bahrain and the UNCT. Inaugurated by H.E. Dr Sheikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Undersecretary for Political Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Mr Khaled El Mekwad, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Bahrain, which brought together a large number of participants from government entities and the UNCT.

Dr Tasnim Atatrah, WHO Representative, participated in the workshop, and discussed areas of joint cooperation and coordination regarding health-related SDGs. The workshop aimed to provide state actors and the UNCT with a platform to jointly identify strategic priorities for the collaboration between the United Nations and Government of Bahrain for the new cooperation cycle 2025-2029.





18 APRIL 2024, MANAMA, BAHRAIN

WHO Bahrain took part in a UNCT workshop held with Bahraini youth, as part of the stakeholder consultations for the development of the UNSDCF 2025–2029. During the consultation, young people reflected on the key challenges and needs related to several development areas in Bahrain. They also considered how the UN could best assist in addressing these issues in alignment with its comparative advantage and guiding principles for a transformational effect, reach and impact. The workshop concluded with an orientation session on the 2024 Regional High-Level Meeting – Young People’s Learning, Skilling, and Transition to Decent Work organized in Tunisia in June 2024.



8 MAY 2024, MANAMA, BAHRAIN

WHO Bahrain participated in a UNCT consultative meeting held with the private sector as part of the development process of the UNSDCF 2025–2029. Coordinated by the UNIDO Investment and Technology Promotion Office, the meeting aimed to provide an opportunity for the private sector – a key development actor in creating employment, building skills, spurring innovation, and supplying affordable goods and services – to share their perspectives and suggestions for the UNCT’s planned activities under the new UNSDCF.

Ministry of Sustainable Development Boosts Statistical Capacity with WHO Support

20 MARCH 2024 - MANAMA, BAHRAIN

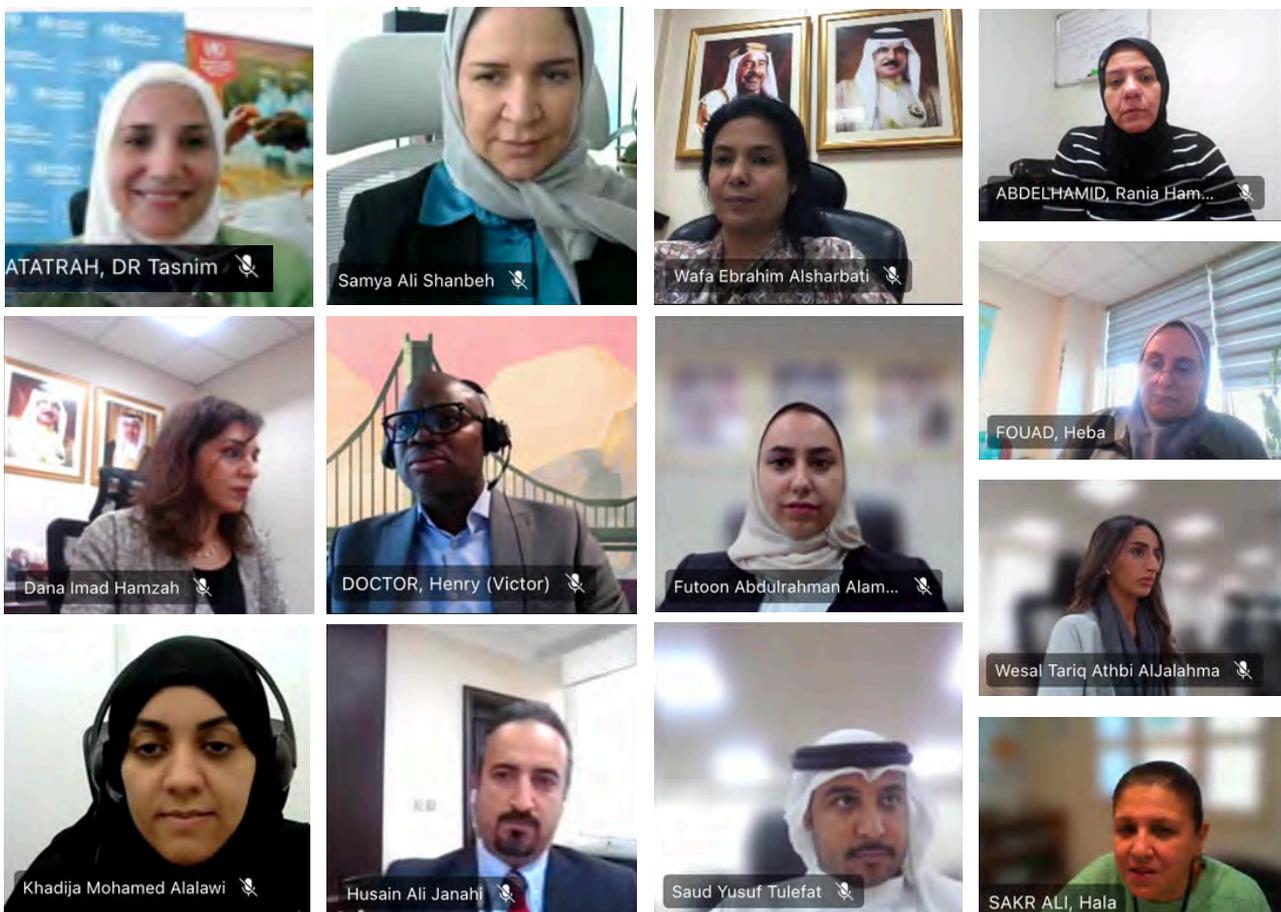
WHO Bahrain organized a virtual technical consultation on monitoring the health-related SDGs, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Sustainable Development and the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office. It aimed to provide guidance on the data collection and calculation of health-related SDG indicators and their integration into national monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Delivered by WHO experts from the Regional Office, the consultation involved more than 20 statisticians and specialists from the Ministry of Health, the Information and e-Government Authority, and the Ministry of Sustainable Development.

It addressed five health-related SDG indicators, including maternal mortality ratio and noncommunicable diseases mortality rate.

Coordinated by the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office, this consultation is one of 17 consultations on the 17 SDGs held by the Ministry of Sustainable Development in collaboration with the UNCT to enhance national statistical capacities and streamline the SDG data collection and monitoring process.

The organization of these 17 consultations came as a result of a roundtable discussion organized in August 2023 between the Ministry of Sustainable Development and the UNCT to explore the challenges and opportunities in collecting and reporting SDG data in Bahrain.





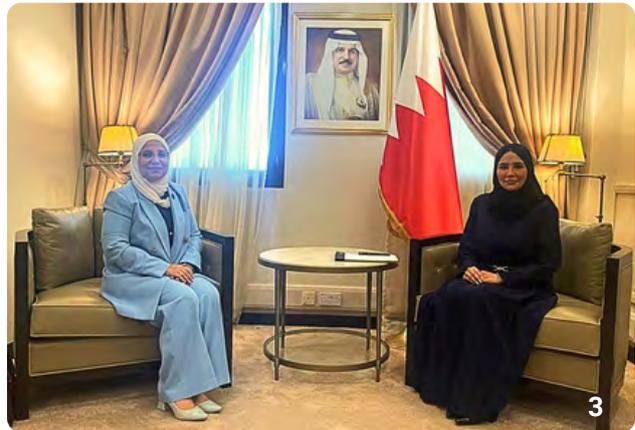
1

WHO Bahrain Advances Health for All

OFFICIAL MEETINGS FROM JANUARY -
JUNE, 2024



2



3



4



5



6

- 1 His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain
- 2 H.E. Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, Capital Governor
- 3 H.E. Ambassador Fatima Abdullah Al Dhaen, Director General of International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 4 H.E. Sheikh Thamer Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Kuwait Ambassador to Bahrain
- 5 H.E. Faisal bin Hareb Al Busaidi, Oman Ambassador to Bahrain
- 6 H.E. Riham Abdelhamid Khalil, Egypt Ambassador to Bahrain



- 7 Dr Rayana Bou-Haka, WHO Representative in Qatar
- 8 UNESCO Team in Qatar
- 9 Mr Tamer Hammouda, Chief Security Advisor, and Mr Majed Mastoor, Field Security Advisor, UNDSS
- 10 UNFPA's Sub-regional Office for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries
- 11 Professor Riyadh Hamzah, President of the Royal University for Women
- 12 Professor Bradley J. Cook, President of the American University of Bahrain
- 13 Professor Mohamed Hany Shehata, Head of Family & Community Medicine Department, Arabian Gulf University

Thank you! From the WHO Bahrain Country Office Team

Inaugurated in July 2021, the WHO Country Office in Bahrain is the 20th WHO country office to open in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, and the 152nd WHO country office globally. Guided by WHO's Thirteenth General Programme of Work, the office provides strategic and technical support to the Government to achieve universal health coverage, address health emergencies, and promote healthier populations.

It collaborates with national health authorities, United Nations partners, and other health-related stakeholders to foster public health collaboration to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ensure that no one's health is left behind.



Dr Deena Alkhamis
Public Health Officer



Ms Nada Mohamed
Health Policy and
Planning Consultant



Ms Zahra Abdulla
Senior Administrative
Assistant



Ms Shanine Mohebat
Health Promotion
Officer



Mr Elsadig Elbakri
Senior Driver



Ms Rayan Butaita
Public Health Associate
Officer



**World Health
Organization**
Bahrain

EDITORIAL TEAM

Shanine Mohebat
Nada Mohamed
Rayan Butaita
Deena Alkhamis
Laura Gonzalez



**World Health
Organization**

Bahrain

Contact Us:



emacobaawr@who.int



<https://x.com/whobahrain>



+973 3876 1387



Al Khair Tower 1, Sanabis,
Bahrain