

## World Health Day and Universal Health Coverage



April 2018, oPt – The Palestinian Ministry of Health, together with WHO in the occupied Palestinian territory and the Palestinian National Institute of Public Health, celebrated World Health Day with two events in the West Bank and Gaza to raise awareness about the importance of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) to ensure ‘Health for All’ in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

World Health Day marks the founding of the World Health Organization on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1948, with 2018 the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organization. Each year, WHO tries to focus attention on important health topics to raise public awareness. This year the theme was Universal Health Coverage (UHC), which aims to ensure access to health services for all without facing financial hardship. UHC promotes improved health system management and tries to ensure the availability of essential medicines and technologies for the diagnosis and treatment, as well as the training of sufficient numbers of health personnel to provide care. UHC is also an important component of sustainable development, poverty reduction and an essential component of efforts to reduce inequities in society.

### Ramallah, West Bank, occupied Palestinian territory

In Ramallah, participants from across the health sector came together to celebrate World Health Day, in commitment to achieving Universal Health Coverage and Health for All in the occupied Palestinian territory. There were speeches and presentations, with opening remarks from Dr Jawad Awad, the Palestinian Minister of Health, Dr Marina Wes, Country Director for the World Bank, and Dr Gerald Rockenschaub, Head of WHO Office in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Palestinian Ministry of Health, WHO, the World Bank and the Palestinian National Institute

of Public Health launched a joint Universal Health Coverage project for the occupied Palestinian territory.

### **Gaza City, occupied Palestinian territory**



In Gaza, participants from the Ministry of Health, UNRWA, health cluster, human rights organizations, academic institutions and UN agencies joined events to celebrate World Health Day, with talks and a panel discussion on the challenges for Universal Health Coverage in Gaza, presentation of a short video, a theatre performance and a public bike race with more than 250 participants.

### **Regional art competition for World Health Day**

In the West Bank and Gaza, the day concluded a regional art competition for schoolchildren aged 8–18 years conducted for the whole WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, which includes 22 countries. A panel of judges selected drawings from across the region, with a Palestinian student from Rafah winning 4th place in the 14-15 year old age group. All students were applauded for their excellent contributions, with an exhibition of the entries on display during both events.

### **Commitment to Universal Health Coverage**

Dr Jawad Awad, Palestinian Minister of Health, reiterated the commitment of the Ministry of Health to achieving Universal Health Coverage for all Palestinians. He welcomed the coming project for the Universal Health Coverage that represents a partnership between the Palestinian

Ministry of Health, WHO, the World Bank and the Palestinian National Institute of Public Health.

Dr Gerald Rockenschaub, Head of WHO Office in the occupied Palestinian territory, stated: "There are evidently major barriers to achieving Universal Health Coverage for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, who continue to experience the effects of on-going occupation and the impact that this has for access to health services, their availability and affordability. This new initiative in partnership with the World Bank and Palestinian National Institute for Public Health, and in conjunction with the Palestinian Ministry of Health, is an important step to broadening Universal Health Coverage to promote Health for All Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory."

Wednesday 18th of April 2018 04:10:32 PM