



MINUTES

of the „Health Sector External Assistance Coordination Meeting”

July 19th, 2017

Venue: The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Moldova, Conference Room (II floor), 2, V. Alecsandri street, MD 2009, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

Date/Time: July 19th, 2017, 10:00 a.m.

Moderator: Dr. Ruxanda Glavan, Minister of Health
Dr. Haris Hajrulahovic, WHO Representative in the Republic of Moldova

Participants:

Ministry of Health	Mrs. Liliana Iasan Mr. Victor Savin Mrs. Maria Diminet Mr. Andrei Cazacu Mr. Alexandru Dragan Mr. Andrei Svet Ms. Lilia Nita
State Chancellery	Mrs. Aurelia Isac
SPHM	Mr. Oleg Lozan Mrs. Viorica Macovei
NHIC	Mr. Daniel Stici Mrs. Maria Lifciu
NCEAH	Mrs. Maria Cumpăna
CIMUP	Mr. Nicolae Jelamschi

PAS Center	Mrs. Stela Bivol
IAEA	Mr. Vasile Benea
SDCA	Mr. Valeriu Sava
European Union Delegation to Moldova	Mrs. Iuliana Stratan Ms. Anzelika Oraite
WHO	Dr. Haris Hajrulahovic
UNDP/ MAPS Mission	Mr. George Bouman Mr. Rune Brandrup Mr. Mihail Peleah
UNICEF	Mrs. Angela Capcelea
UNFPA	Mrs. Rita Columbia Mrs. Natalia Plugaru
UN Women	Mrs. Lucretia Ciurea
TIKA	Mr. Mert Baris Mr. Dmitrii Zaharia
GIZ	Mr. Cornel Riscanu
Embassy of Czech Republic in the Republic of Moldova	Mrs. Daniela Dragalin
Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in Chisinau	Mrs. Justina Jakavonyte Paune
Embassy of the Republic of Italy in Chisinau	Mrs. Stefania Run
Embassy of Romania in Chisinau	Mr. Radu Filip

Distributed Agenda;

Materials: Presentations in Power Point format.

Meeting agenda:

- *“Presentation of UN-SDG MAPS mission, scope and objectives”*, Mr. George Bouma, Team Leader, Sustainable Development Cluster;
- *“Presentation on Nationalization of health related SDGs”*, Mr. Valeriu Gonciar, Head, Division of analysis, monitoring and evaluation of policies, Ministry of Health;
- *“Presentation on Health dimension in UNDAF 2018-2022”*, Mr. Andrei Cazacu, Head, Department of external relations and european integration, Ministry of Health;

SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION ACCORDING TO THE AGENDA

I. Opening meeting, welcoming remarks

The second session of the Health Sector Council Meeting in the field of External Assistance for 2017 was opened by Dr. Ruxanda Glavan, Minister of Health, who welcomed all the participants at the meeting and thanked them for their presence and for the interest shown for this important quarterly organised event.

Therefore, Madam Minister gave the floor to the co-chair of the meeting Dr. Haris Hajrulahovic, WHO Representative in the Republic of Moldova.

Thus, Dr Hajrulahovic thanked for the organisation of that event, and expressed his pleasure to take part and co-chair that session. Therewith, the WHO Representative concluded by expressing the hope that the subjects discussed at that session will provide a good opportunity for a constructive and perspective dialogue in the context of the undergoing reforms in the health sector. Also, Dr. Hajrulahovic recommended that the planned time according to the agenda to be respected in order to ensure effective discussions and conclusions.

On that note, Dr. Ruxanda Glavan stressed the need to respect time provided for each subject and listed all the topics according to the Agenda of the meeting. Also, Madam Minister proposed to listen all the presentations and then to proceed to the questions, answers and discussion session.

Respectively, Madame Minister gave the floor to the representative of the MAPS Mission, Dr. George Bouma, Team Leader, Sustainable Development Cluster, who came with the presentation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs) – scope and objectives.

1.1. Presentation on “UN-SDG MAPS mission, scope and objectives”, Dr. George Bouma, Team Leader, Sustainable Development Cluster;

Firstly, Dr. Bouma thanked Madame Minister for the invitation to the Health Sector Council Meeting in the field of External Assistance, as well as for the opportunity to participate with a presentation within that session.

Therefore, Dr. Bouma started with providing details on the UN SDGs and MAPS mission, objectives and activities, remarking that the abbreviation MAPS means Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support. Therewith, the MAPS representative mentioned that the mission is focused primarily on mainstreaming that means actions needed to be taken at the outset to land the 2030 Agenda at the country levels; acceleration that means progress with nationalization of the Agenda 2030 and individual SDGs; and integrated policy support by the UN Agencies, including identifying opportunities for the development of joint research and policy support.

Dr. Bouma noted that Moldova MAPS mission on SDGs is driven by strong interest expressed by the Government of Moldova to own the process of adapting the SDGs to national needs. Accordingly, the international expert specified that within the social area, priority attention will need to be paid to health as one of the accelerator and a precondition for the achievement of SDGs, including issues related to non-communicable and communicable diseases, access to sexual and reproductive health services and adolescent health. This theme would therefore need to address how the new Moldova National Development Strategy 2030 can integrate health equity to drive simultaneous co-benefits of health and development.

Thus, Dr. Bouma finished mentioning that the scope of the MAPS mission is to support the adapting of the SDGs to the national needs in Moldova.

Madame Minister thanked Dr. Bouma for that introduction and so, the floor was passed to Mr. Valeriu Goncear, Head of the Division of policy analysis, monitoring and evaluation.

1.2. Presentation on “Nationalization of health related SDGs”, Mr. Valeriu Goncear, Head, Division of analysis, monitoring and evaluation of policies, Ministry of Health;

Mr. Goncear presented the nationalization of the health related SDGs in the Republic of Moldova. The speaker started with mentioning the relevant and priority for the Republic of Moldova objectives from Agenda 2030, emphasizing that the adaptation of the SDGs from 2030 Agenda was possible only due to collaboration of the Ministry of Health with the key development partners, which supported the development of the policy documents

in 2015-2017, and namely: the WHO Regional Office for Europe, the WHO Moldova Country Office, UNICEF, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, etc.

Therefore, Mr. Gonciar described the process of coordination the implementation of the Agenda 2030, remarking the National Council of Coordination of the Sustainable Development, created by the Government of the Republic of Moldova through the Government Decision № 912 from 25th of July 2017. Also, it was noted that after participation within the consultative workshops organized during the 2016, at 15th September of the same year, the Ministry of Health presented to the State Chancellery the questionnaire for consultation of national priorities.

Hence, the focus was put on the goal number 3 directly related to health dimension, entitled „*Ensuring a healthy life and promoting everyone's well-being at any age*”. Then, there were presented those nine targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, two of which could be considered aligned and seven partially aligned. Thus, Mr. Gonciar spoke about every target of the sustainable development goal number three, specifying the targets established at the national level, existing policy documents in the health sector, indicators, as well as the argumentation for adapting the set targets.

Therewith, to sum up, Mr. Gonciar listed the mediu-term priorities of the health system of the Republic of Moldova, and namely:

- To consolidate the mobilization of internal resources, including external support, in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030. Medium-term expenditure to be fully linked to the Sustainable Development Strategy;
- Adaptation of national numerical targets, through correlation with Sustainable Development Goals within national health strategies and programmes in the field of health, with their appropriate disaggregation (by gender, age, key population);
- Targeted financial sustainability;
- The inclusion of additional indicators of the National Center for Health Management (HIV incidence per 100,000 uninfected persons by sex, age, population categories; HIV deaths per 100,000 population; prevalence of harmful alcohol consumption by sex, age, environment);
- Participation in the elaboration of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development „*Moldova 2030*”, including the nationalized targets of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 for the health system;
- Strengthening the capacities of the Ministry of Health in strategic planning, developing/monitoring/evaluating health policies, intersectoral collaboration and communication in the realization of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.

Madame Minister thanked Mr. Gonciar for the comprehensive presentation provided and past the floor to the next speaker Mr. Andrei Cazacu, Head, Department of external relations and European integration, Ministry of Health.

1.3. Presentation on “Health dimension in UNDAF 2018-2022”, Mr. Andrei Cazacu, Head, Department of external relations and European integration, Ministry of Health;

Mr. Cazacu, started with highlighting some important elements of the UN development assistance framework for the Republic of Moldova, including country information and context, main achievements and lessons learnt from the past cooperation with the UN and the process to develop the UNDAF document. Therefore, he remarked that the document outlines the vision 2030 of the Republic of Moldova, which is an important element of the well-being of the population: *“In 2030, the Republic of Moldova will be free of poverty and corruption with reduced inequalities and strengthened social inclusion and cohesion so that no-one is left, a country where human rights, gender and women’s empowerment, the rule of law, environmental sustainability and well-being of the population are promoted and respected”*. Then, Mr. Cazacu continued with presenting the strategic priorities of the Republic of Moldova – United Nations Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development 2018-2022: *Priority Area 1: Governance, Human Rights and Gender Equality; Priority Area 2: Sustainable, Inclusive and Equitable Economic Growth; Priority Area 3: Environmental Sustainability and Resilience; Priority Area 4: Inclusive and Equitable Social Development*. Therefore, he focused on priority number four and invited the participants to give their thoughts, proposals and suggestions for the best way forward in terms of making the links and synergies among development goals. Thereby, Mr. Cazacu clarified that the priority number four has the outcome four: *“The people of Moldova, in particular the most vulnerable, demand and benefit from gender-sensitive and human rights-based, inclusive, effective and equitable equality education, health and social policies and services”*.

Thus, from the outcome four he mentioned the national priorities such as: - ***Continuous strengthening of population’s health; - healthy growth and development of children; - HIV and STI prevention and control;*** - access, relevance and quality of education; - development of parenting skills and competencies; - promotion of inclusive education (for Roma children and CwDs in particular); - alignment of the education system to labour-market needs in order to enhance labour productivity and increase employment in the economy; - child protection; ensuring financial sustainability of the social security system; combating VAW and children; - promotion of human rights, gender equality and women’s empowerment; protection of rights of migrant workers and of children left behind.

Hence, Mr. Cazacu came up with some proposals for discussions, and namely: - positioning centrally and prioritising health in the development agenda in the Republic of Moldova; - identifying accelerators and enablers of health sector reform and achievement of health objectives; - best ways to promote intersectorial collaboration and plans to ensure health in all policies and synergy among SDGs to support health improvements; - fostering existing and building new partnerships in health; and finally,

how to implement the health sector reforms in the Republic of Moldova and how to use UNDAF as a tool for that purpose?

Madame Minister, thanked Mr. Cazacu and all the speakers for the very important subjects presented and proposed to proceed to discussion session.

II. Discussions

Thus, Mr. Valeriu Sava thanked Madame Minister for this opportunity and asked two questions. First question was referred to the nationalized SDGs monitoring process, and especially the indicators related to the financial protection, ensuring the access to services and universal coverage. The question was how will be these indicators classified and which will be the mechanism to ensure that the relevant indicators are monitored in the appropriate timeframe, and thus to be sure that the international structures – donating to the health system – will have the “reference points” they can relate to when they want to see what was the progress obtained, due to international donors contribution.

In the context of this question, Mr. Sava suggested to create an intersectoral working group inclusively with participation of the international structures representatives, for ensuring development and evaluation of a set of relevant indicators.

The second question was addressed to the last interlocutor, Mr. Andrei Cazacu. So, Mr. Sava remarked that through the national/local priorities mentioned during the last presentation, the emphasis was put on some groups of population, but at the same time the category of the elderly people was not reached. The question was what is the policy of the Ministry of Health and what are the objectives to be achieved, taking into account the international trend, the aging of the population, the very expensive service consumption of this phenomenon and other aspects that must be considered in the policy documents.

Regarding the development and monitoring of SDGs, Mr. Valeriu Gonciar answered that the first phase was carried out by the State Chancellery together with all relevant national authorities when experts from different institutions were invited to consultations and the process of nationalization and adaptation of the national indicators to the SDGs was examined.

Then, the interlocutor noted that for the second stage, which is currently underway, it was proposed the development by a working group created within the State Chancellery system, of the Development Strategy “*Moldova 2030*”, that is once again based on the respective SDGs. Further, within every authority was planned to be reviewed all the strategies and programmes, as well as, the indicators already found in these documents that need to be aligned to SDGs. Thus, another phase is the development of the branch, ministerial strategies, and here Mr. Gonciar remarked that the system is going through a

very beneficial period, given the fact that the Health System Development Strategy is finalizing in 2017, and an assessment of implementation of that strategy is currently being carried out, and a new strategy aligned to the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 will be finalized soon. Also, he noted that it is obvious that the creation of the mentioned working group is welcomed in order to co-opt all the relevant authorities, as well as, the development partners. How was declared by Mr. Gonciar, this work followed to be finalized till the end of 2017.

Madame Minister thanked Mr. Gonciar for clarification of the raised question and gave the floor to Mr. Cazacu.

Mr. Cazacu thanked Madame Minister and Mr. Sava and specified that the presentation made by him represents only a brief introduction of the UNDAF in the Republic of Moldova considering the limited time according to the Agenda of the meeting. Therewith, Mr. Cazacu remarked that the priority number four "*Inclusive equitable sociable development*" is necessarily foreseen in the SDG number three "*Ensuring life for human being at all ages*" and that the Ministry of Health will undoubtedly take all necessary measures for achieve this SDG, but at the same time, the interlocutor proposed to return later with an ample response regarding the ministerial policy and objectives to be achieved.

Madame Minister urged other questions to be addressed and gave the floor to Mr. Bouma.

The MAPS mission representative mentioned that he was very pleased to be presented at the Health Sector Council Meeting in the field of External Assistance and would very much like to have all the presentations, and particularly, the presentation with the targets that the Ministry of Health set and had achieved. Therewith, he wondered to know if the Ministry of Health is offering to review the global targets for the relevance of the national level and if these targets, especially around maternal and premature mortality and some more health related targets could be considered as achieved for Moldova's health system.

Madame Minister thanked MAPS mission representative for the raised question and acknowledged that surely all presentations can and will be distributed.

With reference to the first target of the SDG number three, regarding the maternal and premature mortality, Mr. Gonciar specified that compared to the Sustainable Development Goals, the target for maternal mortality is reached in our country, so as at the moment are registered 515 cases per 100 thousand population, while the SDG target is 70. In spite of this, the target of 515 cases per 100 thousand populations is not a result that the Ministry of Health is agree with, given the fact that according to the Health System Development Strategy this target is much lower (up to 13 cases per 100,000 population by the end of 2017). In this context, he declared that in real terms for the year 2017 the target on maternal mortality is still not reached.

At the same time, the WHO Representative in the Republic of Moldova, wondered to address to mission members and to answer some of raised by them questions. Thus, Dr. Haris Hajrulahovic, decided to start with the provisions of the National Development Strategic Document „*Moldova 2020*”, mentioning that health actually is not identified as a priority. Thus, he emphasized that it is of great importance to move the health as a major necessity for development. Another message he would like to underline was the necessity of improving the communication on ongoing processes and in this context, he suggested to enhance the use of information regarding the measures planned by the health system of the Republic of Moldova.

Madame Minister thanked Dr. Hajrulahovic for clarification and past the floor to Mr. Goncear.

Mr. Goncear specified that the information system is actually developing in the Republic of Moldova, being implemented in the Public Health Service and is referring to communicable diseases. Another informational system follows to be implemented in hospital health care, but these systems are not integrated in a single information system – the next steps will be ensuring this single information system, which also implies broadening the spectrum of indicators. He also specified that in the presentation was indicated that besides the developed national programmes with target indicators, the Ministry of Health also participated to the development of the interministerial programmes. One of these is the Protocol on water and health and the national programme for implementation of the target indicators regarding the mentioned protocol and the Ministry of Health participated at the development of about twenty fields and the respective targets can be found in that protocol till 2025. So, the targets established will be revised at the middle of term and then adapted to the new phase, maybe till 2030.

At the same time, referring to the principle of „*leaving no one behind*”, Mr. Cazacu complemented that according to the priority area number four and the SDG target 3.8, the Ministry of Health is fully committed on achieving the universal health coverage including the financial risk protection, access to quality, essential health care services and access to safe, effective and high quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

Madame Minister thanked all the speakers and participants for attending the second Health Sector Council Meeting in the field of External Assistance and wondered to make some conclusions.

III. Conclusions

In conclusion, with reference to the subjects presented during the current meeting, Madam Minister Dr. Ruxanda Glavan, added that as a result of nationalization of the

SDGs 2030, the Ministry of Health set up few priorities, and namely, the development of the strategic documents and ongoing policy documents, and here should be mentioned the need to reassess the targets and indicators, and at the same time, to ensure that we have a financial sustainability to maintain the targets and indicators set and this exercise must go hand in hand with the development of the new MTBF. Madame Minister remarked that at the moment the Ministry of Finance, together with relevant authorities, including the Ministry of Health are working at this chapter taking into account the SDGs 2030, and the Ministry of Health is revising the targets, thus, it is working hard to provide the necessary funding.

Therewith, another priority mentioned by Madame Minister, was the draft of the National Development Strategy “*Moldova 2030*” and inclusion of health as a priority for development – as was assumed by the Government – and the Ministry of Health as the central public authority will insist that this promise to be respected and the health to be seen as a priority in the new strategy.

At the same time, Dr. Glavan mentioned that she support the position of WHO Representative to the Republic of Moldova, Dr. Haris Hajrulahovic, regarding the necessity of strengthening the capacities of the Ministry of Health and here she remarked that this desideratum is felt when talking about communicating initiatives and reforms that the Ministry of Health has on its agenda. Madame Minister emphasized that despite the fact that the institution has sufficient capabilities in terms of strategic planning, policy development, monitoring and evaluation, benefiting from multiple international expertise and assistance that the Moldova’s health system is necessarily receiving, at the same time the “communication aspect” represents a huge gap for the Ministry of Health requiring strengthening its capabilities in this field.

By the way, referring to the consolidation of internal resources as well as external assistance for the achievement of the Agenda 2030, Madame Minister also added that during the years 2015-2016, through some structural reforms, it was possible to save substantial financial resources, which were also oriented towards the achievement of these objectives. As an example was mentioned the National Program on Viral Hepatitis, when existing resources were used more rationally and effectively, allowing 3500 patients to be treated compared to 200 patients in 2016; and in 2017 the results being still better for treatment of viral hepatitis. Madam Minister mentioned that this is a concrete example that demonstrates how the optimization and efficiency of the available resources makes it possible to achieve the set goals.

To sum up, Madame Minister presented her gratitude to every representative for participation within the Health Sector Council Meeting in the field of External Assistance and noted that this Council represents a valuable tool of the Ministry of Health which allow to meet quarterly, discuss the measures taken, as well as, further priorities of the health system. Therewith, Madame Minister has once again emphasized the importance

of external support and the concrete, tangible and necessary results for the health of the Moldovan population, achieved with joint efforts. The Minister also expressed her hope to continue to have this beautiful and fruitful partnership with the health system's development partners, especially in the elaboration of the new "Moldova 2030" document, as well as, how was mentioned by Mr. Valeriu Sava, to ensure full openness and transparency when working on documents preparation.

Finally, Madame Minister proposed to have the next Health Sector Council Meeting in the field of External Assistance in October 2017.

Secretary of the Health Sector Coordination
Council on External Assistance

Lilia Nita

