



UNITED NATIONS  
KUWAIT



WHO Country Office  
in Kuwait

Newsletter  
2021



World Health  
Organization  
Kuwait



### Inauguration of WHO Office in Kuwait



Warmly welcomed by the UNCT family in Kuwait, June 2021 saw the inauguration of the WHO Country Office in Kuwait, headed by Dr. Assad Hafeez. This is a critical step towards strengthening WHO's ongoing partnership with the Government of Kuwait.



The opening ceremony was attended by the Minister of Health of Kuwait together with WHO's Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and WHO's Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari who both delivered their remarks virtually.

### Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus visits Kuwait

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus visited Kuwait in July, 2021 where he met with His Royal Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Emir of the State of Kuwait, His Royal Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Crown Prince of the State of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the Prime Minister, H.E Sheikh Dr Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs accompanied by Minister of Health.



Dr. Ghebreyesus thanked the government of Kuwait for their generous contribution to global health and to their unwavering support to the mandates of WHO. He celebrated the establishment of WHO's office in Kuwait as a significant milestone in WHO's long standing partnership with Kuwait. In response, the honorable Kuwaiti officials reinstated their belief in WHO's leadership and the importance of strengthening our collective efforts in responding to future pandemics.

### Enhancing coordination with International Health Relations, MOH

The Joint Programme Review and Planning Mission (JPRM), a planning and consultative process was carried out in coordination with MoH to inform country support plans. This engaged focal persons across ministerial departments in the identification of specific topics of health priority.



**First course for Public Health Leadership convened for Kuwait & GCC**

A flagship leadership programme was rolled out in 2021 by the WHO in coordination with Kuwait Institute for Medical Specializations, Gulf Health Council and in partnership with Johns Hopkins University and UN System Staff College under the leadership of MoH

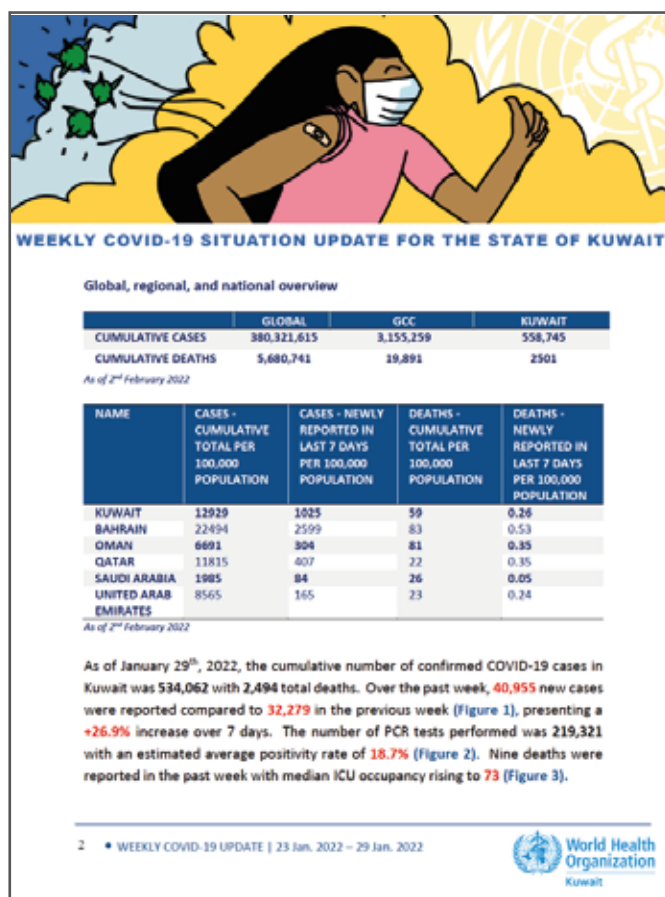
The programme navigated participant experiences, sentiments, and ambitions on a broad range of public health issues through immersive sessions based around group discussions, simulation gameplay and keynote lectures delivered both in-person and virtually by key global leaders of the pandemic response across public health institutions and academia

Over 20 mid/senior level public health officials from the Ministry of Health in Kuwait and neighboring countries were engaged throughout the 4 days in this one-of-a-kind regional platform that principally aimed to inspire a future generation of public health leaders to leverage health diplomacy, effective communication, collaboration, and systems-thinking tools for sustained improvements in people and community health.

**COVID19 Weekly situational analysis and public health intelligence**

As part of the Country Office's mandate to disseminate organizational public health goods and rapid situational updates to various national

stakeholders, a weekly COVID19 update is being disseminated since the inception of the office. The report includes a global, regional, and national epidemiological update, communicates national updates on COVID19 public health measures, provides a summary of public health intelligence and links to updated organizational policy advice materials including expert advisory panel or committee recommendations, frameworks, guidelines, and policy briefs.

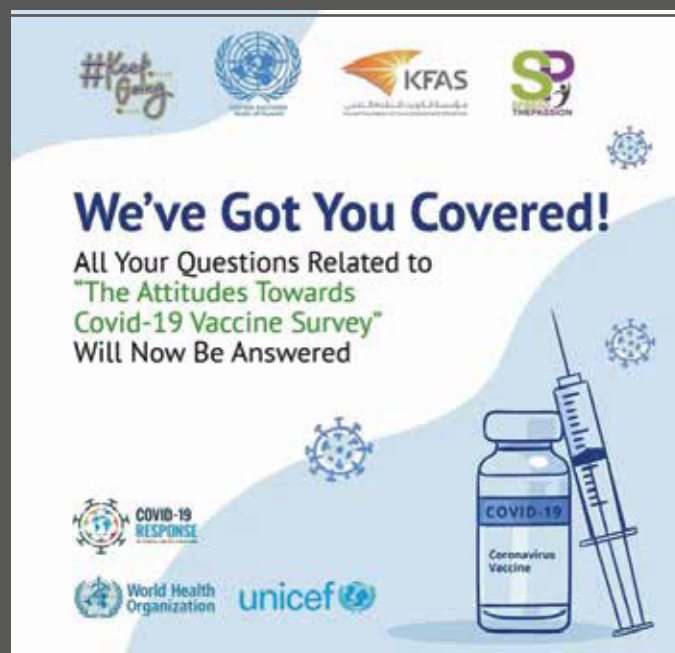


Health Advocacy on various media platforms

WHO Country Office advocacy work on the Ministry of Information's tv programmes was an important avenue for WHO's normative functions in the dissemination of science against misinformation and its call for evidence-informed decision making.



In partnership with "Spread the Passion" NGO and the Resident Coordinator's Office, the Keep Going Campaign was launched to tackle misconceptions around COVID19 vaccines. Youth volunteers were sensitized to the science of evidence through deployment and analysis of a survey to inform the media campaign.



Webinar towards mental health promoting schools

WHO Country Office partnered with a panel of experts from MOH, MOE and UN entities on a webinar aiming to build consensus on the mental health needs and interests of children and adolescents ahead of school reopening. Global statistics and evidence-based interventions guided the discussion shedding light on the potential of technology assisted teachers' training platforms, Chatbots and games-based platforms to promote the uptake of life skills and participation by students.



Field Visits

Field visits were conducted to strengthen cooperation in bolstering public health capacities during the pandemic.



### Health Economics Mission to Kuwait



A health economics mission visited Kuwait to undertake a review of the health financing system. The mission continues into 2022 to support the country in fulfilling KNDP policy 8.6:



Towards this end, the mission aims to 1) Conduct a detailed review of the health financing system in Kuwait; 2) Establish a Health Economics and Financing Unit (HEFU) at MOH; 3) Build institutional capacity in health economics and financing

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### The Healthy Cities Initiative

**Regional Capacity building** WHO regional office and Health Cities Office in Kuwait coordinated a capacity building training workshop for regional partners from GCC countries which was delivered online over three days on the 14th, 21st and 28th of October 2021. The programme explored priorities in the context of the current health situation in GCC countries, sharing tools and examples for city profiling and situation analysis.



**Towards a National Healthy Cities Network** A three-day training program on Healthy Cities program evaluation tools and methodologies was deployed between the 21st – 23rd of December 2021. The training was led by WHO EMRO's Regional Adviser for Health Promotion and Social Determinants of Health in collaboration with Kuwait's Ministry of Health Healthy Cities Office; aiming to carry out a simulated evaluation of the cities of Abdullah Al-Salem and Al Shamiyah prior to their external evaluation to reflect on opportunities, challenges and needs going forward.

### Mission to support data management and health information systems



In line with KNDP Policy 8.3 which envisages enhanced health information technology systems that are enriched with multi-source data; a technical mission visited the National Centre for Health Information from the Regional Office in October 2021 to initiate a review of the health information systems, their integration and analytical potential. This marks the first steps towards strengthening integrated approaches to health information systems that can be interrogated to support evidence to policy decision making.

### Research workshop to improve national rates of exclusive breastfeeding



WHO supported peer review of national research on the determinants and barriers to exclusive breastfeeding to work better with national counterparts in informing advocacy initiatives. It is hoped that the year-long advocacy plan jointly designed by WHO Country Office and PAFN will progressively engage various societal actors in fostering an enabling and supportive environment for mothers to breastfeed their children as recommended by WHO and UNICEF.

### Mission to support translation of evidence to policy

Research is vital to progress towards the knowledge-based Economy envisaged in Kuwait Vision 2030. Towards this end, a high-level taskforce from WHO HQ, regional and country office coordinated a mission for the purpose of establishing sound evidence platforms derived from global research, local data and specific contextual knowledge to guide policymaking. Evidence to Policy unit has been proposed to be embedded in the MOH revised organogram.



## Prioritization exercise for health systems research



In Oct 2021 a priority setting Workshop was conducted by experts from WHO to sensitize stakeholders to the role of research priority setting; to discuss potential tools for setting research priorities and; to work with national stakeholders and identify priority research areas for the Kuwait MOH. The workshop was attended by over 30 participants representing a wide range of institutions within and outside the government who identified 6 research themes with sub-themes categorized as high national priority.

