

A photograph showing two IFRC staff members from behind, assisting an elderly man. The staff member on the left wears a red vest with the IFRC logo and a beige cap. The staff member on the right wears a blue shirt and a dark cap. They are outdoors in a sunny, urban environment. The background shows a building and other people.

# **IFRC-MENA Health and Care Strategic Roadmap 2025-2027**

## FOREWORD

The MENA region stands at a critical crossroads—a region where hope and hardship often collide. Our communities endure the weight of protracted crises, complex emergencies, and the devastating impacts of climate change.



Layered upon these challenges are evolving health needs and mounting financial constraints that test our resolve. Yet, in the face of such adversity, we remain steadfast. The IFRC's Health and Care Strategic Roadmap 2025–2027 is more than just a strategy. It is a beacon of hope and a promise of action—a reflection of our unwavering commitment to protect the dignity, health, and well-being of the most vulnerable.

Rooted in the timeless values of humanity, neutrality, and impartiality, this roadmap equips National Societies across the region to stand ready, respond swiftly, and build resilience where it is needed most. It identifies clear and focused priorities—from emergency medical services and mental health support to water, sanitation, epidemic preparedness, and health services for migrants and marginalized communities. But it goes further. It embraces innovation by integrating digital health solutions, climate resilience, and cash assistance for improved health outcomes, ensuring that our approach remains not only relevant but also forward-looking and inclusive.

This roadmap is the product of months of tireless collaboration, technical expertise, and strategic alignment with global and regional frameworks, including Federation Strategy 2030 and the Agenda for Renewal. It is not just a document—it is a rallying cry for unified and coordinated action. It calls upon us to strengthen partnerships, enhance accountability, and mobilize resources to ensure that our collective efforts translate into real, life-changing impacts for the communities we serve.

We cannot afford to falter. Every plan, every innovation, and every intervention must be driven by a singular purpose: to build stronger, more inclusive, and more resilient health systems that leave no one behind. Our actions today will affect the health, dignity, and futures of millions across the MENA region.

**Together, we can and will make a difference.**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'H. Elsharkawi', with a long, flowing horizontal line extending to the right.

**Dr Hossam Elsharkawi**

**Regional Director**

**IFRC-MENA**

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## **Annex: Abbreviations List**

<b>AI</b>	<b>Artificial Intelligence</b>
<b>BBB</b>	<b>Building Back Better</b>
<b>CAP</b>	<b>Coordination Assessment and Planning</b>
<b>CBHFA</b>	<b>Community-Based Health and First Aid</b>
<b>COP</b>	<b>Community of Practice</b>
<b>CVA</b>	<b>Cash and Voucher Assistance</b>
<b>DREF</b>	<b>Disaster Response Emergency Fund</b>
<b>DRR</b>	<b>Disaster Risk Reduction</b>
<b>EA</b>	<b>Emergency Appeal</b>
<b>EMS</b>	<b>Emergency Medical Services</b>
<b>EMTs</b>	<b>Emergency Medical Teams</b>
<b>ERUs</b>	<b>Emergency Response Units</b>
<b>AFA</b>	<b>First Aid</b>
<b>FSPs</b>	<b>Financial Services Providers</b>
<b>IDPs</b>	<b>Internally Displaced Populations</b>
<b>IEC</b>	<b>Information, Education, and Communication</b>
<b>IFAA</b>	<b>International First Aid Attestation</b>
<b>IFRC</b>	<b>International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies</b>
<b>M&amp;E</b>	<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>
<b>MENA</b>	<b>Middle East and North Africa</b>
<b>MHM</b>	<b>Menstrual Hygiene Management</b>
<b>MHPSS</b>	<b>Mental Health and Psychosocial Support</b>
<b>MHPSSiE</b>	<b>MHPSS-in-Emergencies</b>
<b>NCDs</b>	<b>Non-Communicable Diseases</b>
<b>NGOs</b>	<b>Non-Governmental Organizations</b>
<b>NSs</b>	<b>National Societies</b>
<b>PhiE</b>	<b>Public Health in Emergency</b>
<b>PMER</b>	<b>Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting</b>
<b>PNSs</b>	<b>Partner National Societies</b>
<b>PTSD</b>	<b>Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder</b>
<b>RCCE</b>	<b>Risk Communication and Community Engagement</b>
<b>RCRC</b>	<b>Red Cross and Red Crescent</b>
<b>SOPs</b>	<b>Standard Operating Procedures</b>
<b>UN</b>	<b>United Nations</b>
<b>UNICEF</b>	<b>United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund</b>
<b>WASH</b>	<b>Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene</b>
<b>WHO</b>	<b>World Health Organization</b>



## Preamble:

The health profile of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is diverse and influenced by a variety of socio-economic, political, and cultural factors. The MENA region has a young and rapidly growing population, with a significant proportion under the age of 30. Countries in the region have varying levels of healthcare infrastructure, with some, like the Gulf States, having advanced healthcare systems while others face challenges in access and quality of care and many countries rely heavily on private healthcare services and out-of-pocket health expenditures. Ongoing conflicts and protracted crises in many countries in MENA have severely weakened health systems, with many hospitals destroyed and health workers targeted. Similarly, water and sanitation infrastructures (which are closely linked to direct health impacts) are either severely affected by ongoing conflicts in the region or lag behind due to several reasons including lack of preventive maintenance, overpopulated urban cities, and direct and indirect impact of climate change.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in the MENA region play a vital role in providing various healthcare services and support to Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) systems, particularly in times of emergencies, and for vulnerable populations. Based on the mandate granted by the governments, strategic vision and goals, and available resources, the national societies are adapting their healthcare and WASH services to the specific needs and contexts of their respective nations. Their flexibility, reach, and adherence to humanitarian principles make them indispensable actors in delivering services, especially in vulnerable and crisis-affected regions. The wide variation of services that national societies are offering, including First Aid (FA), Emergency Medical Services (EMS), community-based health services, primary, secondary, and tertiary medical services, and specialized healthcare services besides the support to WASH systems either in emergency or development contexts necessitate that we, at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), diversify and tailor our technical support to meet their needs.

IFRC secretariate is working closely with national societies in the region to enhance their strategic thinking and define their niche. According to emerging situations and growing needs for different health and care services, the IFRC-MENA Regional Office is endeavouring to develop a clear roadmap to compile all current and anticipated required support for all National Societies in the region. A well-developed health and care strategic roadmap is essential for improving our technical health support, ensuring the efficient use of resources, reducing health inequalities, and building resilient health programs for National Societies.



## Challenges and new trends:

Addressing the public health challenges in the MENA region requires a multifaceted approach that includes enhancing health and WASH infrastructure, promoting disease prevention and health education, improving access to essential services including access to safe water and sanitation services, and fostering regional cooperation on health issues. Strategies must take into account the unique socio-political contexts of individual countries and be tailored to address the most common risks.



The increasing prevalence of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) like diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and cancer is alarming. NCDs account for 74% of all deaths in the MENA region, according to World Health Organization (WHO) estimates. Factors contributing to this rise include urbanization, sedentary lifestyles, and dietary changes, such as increased consumption of processed foods high in sugar and fats.

Despite advancements in healthcare, infectious diseases remain a significant public health issue in several MENA countries. Infectious diseases in the MENA region are shaped by a complex mix of environmental, social, and political factors. While countries with strong healthcare systems have managed to control many infectious diseases, conflict-affected and low-income regions continue to struggle with high rates of disease and limited resources. Inconsistent vaccination coverage contributes to outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles and polio, especially in conflict-affected states where healthcare access is disrupted.

Mental health disorders are increasingly being recognized as a significant public health issue in the MENA region. Depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are prevalent due to ongoing conflicts, political instability, and displacement. The WHO estimates that mental health conditions account for about 15% of the total disease burden in the region.

Water and sanitation are critical challenges in the MENA region due to water scarcity, rapid urbanization, population growth, and the impacts of climate change. The MENA region is one of the most water-scarce areas in the world, with an estimated 80-90% of its population living in areas of high-water stress. Access to safe water and sanitation is equally variant in the region with some having close to 99% coverage and many with barely 50% in urban areas not to mention the discrepancy between urban and rural communities in terms of coverage.



Approximately 40 million people in MENA lack access to basic sanitation services and only 60% of wastewater is safely treated, with much of the untreated sewage polluting rivers, groundwater, and coastal waters. Inadequate access to clean water and sanitation in MENA has significant health implications leading to higher rates of water and vector borne diseases, such as cholera, typhoid, and Malaria particularly for vulnerable populations.

While progress is being made through innovative approaches, infrastructure investments, and international support, substantial challenges remain.

Inadequate access to clean water and sanitation in MENA has significant health implications leading to higher rates of waterborne diseases, such as cholera, diarrhoea, and typhoid, particularly for vulnerable populations. While progress is being made through innovative approaches, infrastructure investments, and international support, substantial challenges remain. Ongoing conflicts, civil unrest, and economical strains in many MENA countries have devastating effects on public health. Hospitals and clinics are often destroyed, and healthcare workers may flee or become casualties of war. Access to essential health services diminishes drastically, leading to increased morbidity and mortality. Moreover, the MENA region is hosting millions of refugees and internally displaced populations (IDPs) who lack access to equitable healthcare services.

**Public health is continually evolving to address emerging health challenges, technological advances, and changing societal needs. Here are some of the most prominent new trends and directions shaping the future of public health:**

### **Digital Health and Health Technology Integration**

The integration of digital tools is transforming public health, improving accessibility, efficiency, and quality of healthcare services. Telemedicine/Telehealth, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning, Wearable Technology and Health Tracking, Digital Nudges, and Health Data Analytics are tools and technologies that would change the ways we address and manage various public health issues.

### **Climate Change and Environmental Health**

Climate change is increasingly recognized as a public health crisis, impacting everything from disease patterns to food security. Climate change is intensifying environmental health challenges in the MENA region, impacting water resources and infrastructure, air quality, food security, and public health. Strengthening public health systems, promoting renewable energy, and improving water management are crucial steps for MENA countries to adapt to the growing impacts of climate change.





## Pandemic Preparedness and Response “One Health” Approach

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need for robust epidemic/pandemic preparedness and response capabilities within public health systems. Investment in building capacities to strengthen national responses by supporting local health systems via early detection, providing testing and treatment, vaccination campaigns, ensuring access to adequate WASH services, and promoting public health messages and measures are needed now to prevent and mitigate risks of outbreaks in a more efficient way.



The “One Health” approach recognizes that human health is closely linked to the health of animals and the environment, promoting collaboration across sectors. One Health is not new, but it has become more important in recent years because many factors have changed interactions between people, animals, plants, and our environment. Antimicrobial-resistant germs, vector-borne diseases, and diseases in food animals are a few important examples of topics covered by this approach.



## Expanded focus on aging and mental health

Public health is increasingly focusing on the challenges and opportunities of aging populations addressing topics like preventive health for older adults, Age-Friendly homes/cities, and social isolation. Mental health has become a primary focus in public health due to the rising prevalence of mental health disorders and their impact on society. Community-Based Mental Health Programs and integration of mental health in primary healthcare showing growing attention and need more investment to expand.

## “Building Back Better (BBB)” concept

The term ‘Build Back Better’ originated in the Sendai disaster management framework of 2015 as a holistic concept to generate resilience through well-balanced disaster risk reduction measures, including restoration of infrastructure, revitalization of livelihoods and the economy, and the restoration of local culture and environment. The 2018 World Bank “Building Back Better Report” outlined how to build back stronger (more productive, more resilient), faster (limiting the impact of shocks) and more inclusively (ensuring nobody is left behind). This concept is now being used to guide strategies and support recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

The landscape of public health is rapidly evolving, driven by technological advancements, environmental challenges, and shifting demographic needs. Together, these interconnected priorities reflect a comprehensive and forward-looking vision for public health, ensuring resilience, equity, and preparedness in the face of emerging global challenges.

## Objectives:

With the growing need to support national societies in the MENA region to respond and address various public health emergencies that are affecting our region, a strategic roadmap is becoming a necessity and priority document to guide and tailor required support. The IFRC will actively work towards identifying the areas of main gap to prioritize in supporting national societies in the region. Our collective technical input should be cohesive, integrated, effective, and realistic in responding to evolving needs and gaps. The regional health and care strategic roadmap would help us in different ways including:

## Addressing Health Challenges Proactively

A well-designed health and care strategic roadmap ensure that IFRC-MENA in cooperation with National Societies (NSs) can anticipate challenges and act before they reach critical levels. Without a strategy, health systems are often reactive rather than proactive, addressing issues only after they become severe or widespread.

## Efficient Use of Resources

A health strategy enables the efficient allocation of limited resources, such as funding, healthcare personnel, and medical supplies. With clear priorities and action plans, the IFRC can ensure that resources are directed where they are most needed and can have the greatest impact.

## Coordinating multi-sectoral efforts

Health is influenced and affected by many factors and sectors beyond the healthcare system including education, environment policy, and urban planning. A comprehensive health roadmap ensures collaboration between different sectors, enabling a more holistic approach to health and well-being. This roadmap will help in guiding coordinated support to NSs in different relevant and interlinked topics like WASH and climate, health services and cash, and medical services for migrants and in emergencies.

## Monitoring, evidence-based and Accountability

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are essential for making evidence-based and data-driven adjustments to IFRC programs and ensuring that health strategic directions remain relevant and effective. The health and care strategic roadmap will help us ensure accountability and transparency in the use of resources and the support we offer to NSs in the region via clear targets, benchmarks, and monitoring mechanisms.

## Resource mobilization

The first step toward having a successful resource plan is to define the targets and required resources to achieve them. Having a health and care strategic roadmap would support our effort to secure more funds toward clear programs and objectives we aim to implement. Moreover, it will help donors within the Red Cross and Red Crescent (RCRC) movement and outside to channel their support toward predefined realistic and essential programs and activities.

## Improving Health Outcomes

The ultimate goal of health strategies, policies, and plans is to enhance health outcomes and people's well-being. The regional health and care roadmap will help in achieving this goal by supporting the building more resilient health system for NSs by ensuring preparedness for health emergencies, aligning our goals with national priorities at the community level, and reducing inequalities by targeting the most vulnerable populations.

## Strategic Directions:

### Emergency Health and Medical Services

- ▶▶ In 2023, the world experienced 326 major natural disasters, resulting in 86,473 deaths, affecting 93.05 million people, and causing USD 202.65 billion in direct economic losses.
- ▶▶ Compared to the last decade and despite a 37% decrease in the affected population, the death toll was 482% higher, and economic losses were 23% larger. Libya, Syria, and Morocco were among the top ten countries globally in terms of both disaster-related deaths and direct economic losses.
- ▶▶ Worldwide in 2023, Floods were the most frequent disasters and affected the most people, Earthquakes were the deadliest, and Storms led to the most significant direct economic losses.

### Epidemic and Pandemic Preparedness, Readiness, and Response Capacities

- Increase capacities of NSs in rapid assessment and coordination for different public health emergencies.
- Strengthen NSs' public health surveillance systems via effective community-based surveillance that could map risks and hazards at the community level, support early detection of potential outbreaks, and enhance effective response.
- Expand programs to build capacities of NSs in Epidemic Control for Volunteers- and Community-Based Health and First Aid (CBHFA) modules; to improve their readiness and enhance community awareness of different Epidemic/Pandemic scenarios.
- Boost the NSs knowledge on developing triggers for anticipatory action for potential outbreaks utilizing IFRC guidance on [\*\*Approaches to anticipatory action for disease outbreaks and epidemics.\*\*](#)
- Work with NSs to clarify the role that community volunteers/health workers can play in any potential disease outbreaks and equip them accordingly.





## Quality Assurance of Medical and Specialized Healthcare Services of NSs

- Support NSs to improve the medical services they are providing via primary, secondary, or tertiary healthcare facilities to meet minimum national and international standards.
- Conduct regular reviews, lessons learned exercises and evaluations for ongoing programs and medical services to ensure their relevancy, feasibility, suitability, and cost-effectiveness to help making evidence-based decisions on future investments.
- Systematize and contextualize the mobile medical services to meet the needs of marginalized and hard-to-reach populations with essential healthcare services.
- Advise and provide tailored technical guidance on various specialized healthcare services/programs that NSs are running such as immunization, blood banks, nutrition, and rehabilitation.
- Advocate for augmented monitoring, evaluation, and data management capacities of NSs to capture the data from their different medical services and programs utilizing advanced technologies and innovations.

## Emergency Medical Response Capacity

- Enhance awareness of NSs on health and WASH Emergency Response Units (ERUs) and Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) systems, types, structures, and deployment mechanisms.
- Provide technical support for NSs to establish and operate their own emergency response plans and structures that meet their niche, needs, and context in fields of medical services, public health, WASH, and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS).
- Position NSs in front of other movement partners, national authorities, and WHO to define the roles and capacities that NSs can contribute to in response to different emergencies such as delegates, equipment, or logistics.
- Support NSs who are engaged in EMS and prehospital care to provide quality and timely support for the targeted population via efficient ambulance services and community volunteers in different contexts.

# Community Health

- ▶▶ **Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are the world's leading providers and trainers in first aid (trained more than 12.4 million people in first aid in 2022).**
- ▶▶ **NCDs account for over 66% of all deaths in MENA region and cause on average one in four premature adult deaths and its economic burden is projected to increase by 30%, reaching around \$1.7 trillion annually if current trends continue until 2030.**
- ▶▶ **Global analysis has shown that governments can generate up to a \$10 return for every \$1 invested into community health**

## Health promotion, disease prevention, and Care in Communities:



- Expand the building capacity of community health volunteers and master trainers on CBHFA and Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) to create a regional pool of qualified trainers on community health.
  - Provide technical support to NSs on different aspects related to community health programs including building strategies, operational plans, the package of services, drafting concept notes and proposals, and evaluation.
  - Establish a regional repository/compendium of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials on different health promotion topics that NSs can utilize and contextualize in various contexts.
  - Adopt a comprehensive approach to identify the roles and responsibilities of the community health volunteers and committees in different public health emergencies and prepare and equip them accordingly.
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- Support NSs in integrating NCDs interventions into emergency and non-emergency contexts, emphasizing the importance of going beyond prevention and lifestyle promotion to empowering volunteers for screening, care, and referrals (continuum of care).
  - Strengthen data management of NSs by standardizing reporting, improving M&E tools, and creating impactful case studies and success stories to highlight their community-based interventions and programs.

## High-quality First Aid programs:

- Harmonize the First Aid programs of the MENA NSs by providing support to NSs on their applications to obtain the International First Aid Attestation (IFAA) award and promote the expansion of the MENA IFAA Committee through identifying new IFAA Representatives in the MENA region.
- Expand capacity building efforts to train more qualified First Aid trainers and master trainers for NSs to cascade down this capacity at the community level.
- Work actively with NSs and other subject matter experts to develop First Aid programs in schools including technical manuals, training tools/games, and program designs/templates.



- Advise NSs to develop their own commercial FA programs (First Aid in Workplace) via conducting scientific market analysis/market, identifying targeted groups, gaps, and opportunities, and encouraging peer-to-peer support and sharing experiences on this topic.
- Contribute to fundraising and resource mobilization endeavour to support FA programs including FA training kits, different types of community FA kits (home, car, school, workplace...), and operational costs to run FA programs effectively.



## Enhanced experience and knowledge sharing and scientific data management:



Facilitate communication and coordination among NSs in the region through regular community health Community of Practice (CoP) meetings supporting the exchange of knowledge, sharing of best practices, and collaborative problem-solving initiatives.

Enhance regional collaboration and cooperation with RCRC movement's partners and United Nations (UN) agencies like WHO and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) by actively engaging in Inter-Agency Working Groups, promoting joint initiatives and coordinated responses toward community health priorities at regional and country levels.



Promote a culture of peer learning and mentorship among NSs to build capacities, share experiences, and strengthen regional solidarity in addressing different health challenges through effective community-based interventions.

Lead the creation of scientific research culture among NSs to disseminate their findings/data from different community-based programs through publications, conferences, public lectures, and engagement with the wider community.



Advocate for positioning NSs as main reliable partners in the community health sector at the national level and try to profile and highlight their eminent work at several scientific platforms and meetings.



## Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

- ▶▶ **An estimated 1 in 6 adolescents in the MENA region lives with a mental disorder.**
- ▶▶ **There are less than 9 mental health workers per 100,000 people in the MENA region, significantly lower than the region with the highest number in Europe 45.**
- ▶▶ **Rates of mental health conditions can double in areas affected by war and conflict and have far long-lasting impacts that remain beyond it.**

### Expanded Capacities for MHPSS Programming within National Societies

- Conduct different capacity building exercises on different aspects of MHPSS to empower NSs to design, implement, and sustain effective MHPSS programs.
- Adapt, contextualize, and disseminate MHPSS manuals and resources for MENA NSs, aligning with the local culture and context.
- Customize PMER tools to enhance assessment, data management, impact measurement, and reporting for MHPSS interventions via a standardized list of indicators and systematic monitoring, evaluation, and reporting mechanisms.
- Enhance resource mobilization and foster partnerships with relevant expertise/entities to broaden the reach, effectiveness, and quality of MHPSS programs within NSs.

### Integration of MHPSS in Multi-Sectoral Programs and Community-Based Approaches



Support NSs to mainstream MHPSS considerations into different NSs programs/projects like emergency health, WASH, shelter, and protection services to provide holistic care and support.



Support National Societies in adopting community-led MHPSS interventions that empower local populations to identify needs, develop tailored solutions, and strengthen collective resilience.



Prioritize the well-being of volunteers and staff by advocating for dedicated resources and integrating self-care, peer support, and stress management measures into various MHPSS initiatives, ensuring their ability to sustain efforts in challenging environments.

## Boosted Preparedness and Response for Emergencies and Humanitarian Crises

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Increase regional surge capacity by providing the needed capacity building opportunities and update the MENA MHPSS surge roster to maintain a ready pool of skilled MHPSS responders available for deployment in crises.

Ensure that IFRC's MHPSS resources and emergency manuals are fully adapted to reflect the MENA context for culturally relevant emergency support.

Support National Societies in drafting tailored MHPSS interventions for Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) and Emergency Appeal (EA) applications.

Work closely with NSs on securing resources, tools, IEC materials, and kits to provide quality MHPSS activities for different age groups during variable contexts.

## Advocacy, coordination, and profiling of NSs in the MHPSS sector

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Maintain and enhance the MENA MHPSS community of practice functioning through regular virtual and in-person meetings to exchange knowledge, best practices, resources, and insights on different MHPSS topics.

Lead the development of a regional repository of MHPSS materials, guidelines, and training resources to ensure knowledge retention and support consistent capacity building across the region.

Elevate NSs as key scientific and professional contributors at both national and regional levels in front of local authorities, RCRC movement's partners, academia, and UN agencies, highlighting their expertise, presenting case studies and innovative practices, and impact in the MHPSS field.





## Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)

- ▶▶ **Out of the 17 most water-stressed countries in the world, 14 are in the MENA region.**
- ▶▶ **The MENA region is home to about 6.3% of the world's population but has access to nearly 2% of the world's renewable freshwater.**
- ▶▶ **By the year 2050, two-thirds of MENA countries could have less than 200m3 of renewable water resources per capita per year, which translates to less than a lifeline quantity of drinking water.**



### WASH in Emergencies

- Expand building and maintaining of qualified and professional WASH capacities for emergency WASH responses in the region to support different emergencies at national, regional, or global levels as needed.
- Ensure efficient utilization of available WASH global and regional emergency tools and capacities via increasing awareness of NSs on these resources which include expert delegates, units/equipment, and cash.
- Advise NSs in MENA to consider suitable and tailored WASH interventions and plans to respond to variable emergencies at the national level via DREF and EA applications including responses to epidemic/pandemic emergencies.
- Lead the effort in advocating for considering more sustainable WASH emergency interventions to link humanitarian and development WASH programming and funding by investing more and better in the 'Humanitarian-Development Nexus'.



### WASH in Institutions (schools and health care facilities)

- Improve NSs capabilities on water quality monitoring and surveillance, water supply systems including operation and maintenance, and sustainability of WASH systems in schools and healthcare facilities.
- Increase capacities on technical choices for water supply (e.g., drilling) in challenging environments (e.g., drought-prone areas) and set up partnerships to collaborate with experts.

- Provide technical advice to NSs on the most efficient options for WASH facilities rehabilitation, safe excreta disposal, wastewater and solid waste management including hazardous medical waste in health facilities, vector control, and drainage.
- Continue investing in hygiene promotion and Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) at schools and expand to address the hygiene needs of people with incontinence.



## Urban and developmental WASH

- Foster the capacity of NSs in green and nature-based approaches and WASH climate smart interventions, including moving towards a low-carbon WASH sector and embracing local, market-based programs and humanitarian responses.
- Support National Societies in integrating climate risk assessment and mitigation, anticipatory action, and early warning systems into their WASH strategies, policies, and plans.
- Promote the concept of water security and peace and support enabling local communities to address the key causes of water-related stress, tensions, and conflicts through enhanced water resource management.
- Integrate water and sanitation intervention in more comprehensive urban resilience programs and climate change mitigation plans, making cities more flood and drought resistant.



## Advocacy, coordination, and resource mobilization

- ▶▶ 3 countries in MENA are among the top 6 IFRC network funding requirements for health and wellbeing in the 2025 IFRC Global Plan.
- ▶▶ Mobilizing efforts on humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy and supporting National Societies in the MENA region in pursuing innovative and diversified funding strategies were 2 of the main highlighted points in the [Amman Declaration 2024](#).

One of the main goals of this new roadmap is to work on positioning the national societies as a main actor in different health and WASH files before all stakeholders at the national level and support resource mobilization and coordination efforts. To achieve this goal, we will work on the following dimensions:



### Health and care strategic directions for national societies:

- Identify the niche and scope of services for various health and care thematic and focus areas.
- Support the health and care department at NSs in establishing clear annual operational plans.
- Provide technical support to NSs to develop all necessary policies, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and guidance for their health and care services and interventions during emergencies.
- Conduct analysis and cost-effectiveness studies for different medical and healthcare services to examine their added value to the community.
- Coordinate the dialogue between different departments at NSs that offer services interlinked with health and care sectors.



## Positioning national societies in front of various stakeholders at the national level:

- Work closely with national societies on defining the auxiliary role they can play in the health and care field in different contexts and agree on this with local authorities utilizing IFRC resources like [Guidance on law and public health emergency preparedness and response](#).
- Promote the position of NSs as reliable partners in front of UN agencies and other international organizations and donors.
- Coordinate contributions of partners to support different health and care sectors.
- Support NSs to present and speak about their work and profile their NSs' health and care services in different scientific platforms and regional and global gatherings.

## Enhance resource mobilization for health and care sectors

- Work with NSs on developing promotional documents highlighting their niche and strategic directions of health and care services.
- Diversify the base of donors and fund resources to support the health and care sector within the RCRC movement's partners, international organizations and donors, and local resources as well.
- Support the development of sustainability and self-sufficient plans to wean medical and healthcare services from external support.
- Integrate health and WASH sectors in various emergency fund appeals as essential interventions and link them with other relevant sectors where applicable.





## Special considerations:

### Climate change and disaster risk reduction (DRR)

Climate change has led to more frequent and extreme weather events, including floods, storms, droughts, and wildfires. Climate change is intensifying environmental health challenges in the **MENA** region, impacting water resources, air quality, food security, and public health. **MENA** countries are implementing various strategies to address and adapt to climate change impacts on environmental health, though progress is often hampered by resource constraints and political challenges. The new health and care roadmap will have a special focus on this topic and will try to align our effort with [IFRC Global Climate Resilience Platform](#) targets and focus areas via:

- Improve NSs staff and volunteers' knowledge of the main definitions, concepts, and impacts of climate change and disaster risk reductions on health in general.
- Support NSs to integrate climate change and DRR concepts in different preventive, curative, and rehabilitation healthcare services we consider at community and healthcare facilities as well.
- Collaborate with climate change and DRR team to develop/adopt disaster risks assessment tools which could help NSs to identify potential risks that might affect business continuity of health and care services.
- Invest, with relevant technical experts, in building capacities of NSs on early warning systems and anticipatory action planning to address potential risks and design mitigation plans accordingly.
- Provide technical guidance to NSs on climate-smart interventions, nature-based solutions, and environment-friendly measures for various health and WASH interventions and retrofitting of infrastructures to reduce their carbon footprint and environmental impact.
- Enhance awareness of health and care providers on the impact of climate change on health and how to address these issues including air and water quality, climate-induced stress disorders, acute watery diarrheal diseases, and supply chain disruptions.

The health and well-being of migrants are critical components of the IFRC's mission to provide humanitarian aid and support to vulnerable populations. Migrants often face unique health challenges due to their mobility, legal status, and the conditions they encounter during their journeys and in host communities. The MENA region is home to over 40 million migrants and 15.7 million IDPs. This accounts for 26% of the world's total IDPs, positioning the MENA region as the second largest concentration of IDPs after sub-Saharan Africa. Migrants may face challenges to access medical care and/or medication during their journey related to cost, legal status, proximity to healthcare services, and language barriers. Many national societies in the MENA region are involved in providing different services to migrants during their journeys or within host communities including health care services.

### The strategic goals and actions to enhance migrants' health for the IFRC-MENA regional office would include:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhance awareness of NSs on migrants' health issues and available resources to tackle this topic like the recently released <a href="#">WHO evidence brief</a>.</li> <li>- Advise NSs, in coordination with local healthcare authorities, to adopt essential healthcare services packages to be considered for Migrants in different contexts and prepare teams and resources accordingly. These services could be part of the <a href="#">Humanitarian Service Points</a> or integrated in the existing healthcare services and facilities of the national societies.</li> <li>- Support strengthening partnerships with relevant actors at the national level who are involved in providing healthcare services to migrants and displaced populations including private sectors, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), health authorities, and UN agencies.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work closely with other climate change and disaster risk reduction experts to advise NSs on the root causes of migrant crises in relation to these topics and how to design programs to tackle them in a proactive manner.</li> <li>- Strengthen health information systems that NSs are using to capture data on migrants' health that would help in providing a quality continuum of care and offer reliable data for decision-makers.</li> <li>- Promote the role of NSs in addressing migrants' health in their countries at national, regional, and global scientific and professional forums via success stories, scientific papers, and information/press releases.</li> </ul> |
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## Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) for Health

CVA for health outcomes is a growing field, recognized for its flexibility and potential to address both immediate and systemic barriers to healthcare. CVA supports health outcomes by reducing financial barriers to healthcare and addressing both direct (e.g., treatment costs) and indirect costs (e.g., transportation, food). It complements traditional supply-side interventions (e.g., financing health facilities) by directly empowering individuals to access services. It provides flexibility and dignity for recipients, supports healthier communities, and enhances access to essential services. However, successful implementation requires careful planning, monitoring, and collaboration with health systems. The health and care roadmap will adopt the [RCRC movement position paper on CVA for health outcomes](#) and will try over the next few years to focus on the following pillars:



Enhance awareness and knowledge of NSs about different aspects of the CVA for health outcomes via webinars, joint workshops with CVA experts, sharing relevant materials, and attending relevant scientific meetings.

Support NSs to develop their own decision-making tree to adopt CVA for health outcomes considering suitable and feasible choices toward organizational capacity, market functionality, financial services providers (FSPs) capacities, policy alignments, and community preferences.



Work closely with NSs to design their CVA for health outcomes program based on best practices and context analysis to decide on assessment criteria, usage flexibility, modality, and delivery mechanisms.

Strengthen NSs' capacity on monitoring and evaluation of CVA programs and consider/design tools that can capture progress and impact in an effective manner.



Advocate for CVA for health outcomes programs, where suitable, in front of main donors to consider NSs as main actors in this field and share their experiences at various platforms.

## Conclusion

The Health and Care Strategic Roadmap 2025-2027 for the MENA region lays out a comprehensive framework to address the region's multifaceted public health challenges. Guided by the IFRC-MENA regional office directions, [IFRC Health and Care Framework 2030](#), [IFRC Strategy 2030](#) and [The IFRC's Agenda for Renewal](#), this roadmap emphasizes proactive, resource-efficient, and context-specific strategies to support National Societies (NSs) in delivering quality health services. It identifies key priorities, including combating non-communicable diseases, enhancing mental health services, ensuring access to safe water and sanitation, integrating climate resilience, and strengthening pandemic preparedness. Moreover, it highlights the importance of community-based approaches, leveraging digital health technologies, and fostering regional collaboration for impactful interventions.

By positioning NSs as vital partners in public health at national levels, the roadmap underscores the need for multi-sectoral coordination, enhanced capacity building, and robust monitoring frameworks to ensure sustainability, accountability and data-driven decision-making. Additionally, it advocates for sustainable resource mobilization, empowering NSs to address health inequalities, support vulnerable populations, and achieve long-term resilience in healthcare systems. Ultimately, this strategic roadmap serves as a vital tool to improve health outcomes, enhance well-being, and ensure equitable access to care across the MENA region.

