

## Country Office Evaluation - Senegal

### Evaluation brief – October 2019

#### Context

Country office evaluations were included in the Organization-wide evaluation workplan for 2018-2019, approved by the Executive Board in January 2018. They encompass the entirety of WHO activities during a specific period and aim to provide findings, recommendations and lessons that can be used in the design of new strategies and programmes in-country.

#### Objectives and scope of the evaluation

The main purpose of this evaluation was to identify achievements, challenges and gaps and document best practices and innovations of WHO in Senegal on the basis of its achievements over the period 2016-2018. These included not only results achieved by the WHO Country Office (WCO) but also contributions at regional and global levels to the country programme of work.

#### Key findings and conclusions

**Question 1:** Were the strategic choices made in the Country Cooperation Strategies (and other relevant strategic instruments) the right ones to address Senegal's health needs and coherent with government and partners' priorities?

There is ample evidence supporting the relevance, appropriateness and responsiveness of WHO's contribution to the health needs of Senegal, as reflected in the strategic choices WHO made during the period of the evaluation. However, WHO's work was only partially guided by the Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS).

WHO enjoys close collaboration with Ministry of Health representatives, which helps foster the relevance and national ownership of outcomes. Despite WHO's high responsiveness to requests from the Ministry of Health, there were some discrepancies in focus, particularly in the following areas: noncommunicable diseases, social determinants of health, human resources for health, medicines regulation, subnational health policy and community health. The limited focus on the health aspects beyond Sustainable Development Goal 3 (for example Goals 3 and 6 where WHO's role seems to be less clear) curtailed the WCO's ability to meaningfully contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

WHO cannot effectively address all the pressing health needs of Senegal. Stakeholders have high expectations of WHO's contribution, and WHO should clarify with Government partners what are the most strategic roles it can and should play in Senegal considering its comparative advantage.

**Question 2:** What is the contribution/added value of WHO toward addressing the country's health needs and priorities?

WHO contributed to significant achievements in all key strategic priority areas of the CCS, including: health systems strengthening, supporting the development of the health financing strategy, the consolidation of the drug supply chain, the legislative and institutional development of the Senegal Agency for Health Care Coverage, and the production of national health accounts. Progress was made in maternal and child health (notably through supporting the joint initiative of the French Muskoka Fund), food safety, and the water, sanitation and hygiene sector. WHO's work in facilitating the establishment of the "One Health" approach in Senegal, and the conduct of joint external evaluations, was considered instrumental in the fight against diseases.

During the period of the Twelfth General Programme of Work, WHO did not have a theory of change or logical framework, with relevant indicators, baselines and targets, thus hampering the accurate understanding of the extent of achievement of WHO's contribution to the expected results and long-term outcomes.

Notwithstanding the WCO's significant achievements, additional needs were identified in all priority areas which were considered to require further efforts by WHO, notably: maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health, emergency preparedness and integrated disease surveillance. Cross-sectoral policy strategies, such as environmental health, nutrition, "One Health", universal health coverage and the fight against noncommunicable diseases, all key priorities of the Government of Senegal, will benefit from the strategic leadership and strengthened technical support of WHO.

WHO's achievements are the result of the integrated support provided by the three levels of WHO and coordinated through the WCO, particularly in terms of

the provision of technical support and capacity-building opportunities to the Ministry of Health and other national partners. This is an area where the Regional Office for Africa could play a stronger role in bringing countries together to facilitate exchange, capacity building and regional cooperation through additional opportunities such as online platforms in which national counterparts can exchange lessons and best practices so as to learn from each other's experiences.

The lack of Government resources to implement certain policies and strategies that have been jointly developed poses a risk to the sustainability of results achieved. Hence, WHO's strategic planning needs to anticipate alternative sources for resource mobilization and the support of partners for the implementation and uptake of the important results of its joint work with Government and other partners.

### **Question 3:** How did WHO achieve the results?

WHO has been able to produce a considerable number of highly relevant and valuable outputs in Senegal with limited human and financial resources. Nevertheless, this limited resource base and the vast workload, largely based on ongoing requests for support from the Ministry of Health, some of which do not take into account WHO's comparative advantage, leads to unequal assistance to different health areas and to a gap between the expectations of the Ministry of Health and WHO's capacity to respond accordingly.

WHO's comparative advantage lies in its key functions of leadership, including partner coordination, provision of technical advice for policy actions, setting norms and standards, and associated capacity building. It is therefore essential that the WCO have the necessary financial and human resources to provide these essential functions.

Partnerships and collaborative arrangements are essential to achieve WHO's targets and WHO needs to keep them active and to renew them when necessary. Nevertheless, the partner landscape has evolved, and the need to show value for money is increasing. In this wider cross-sectoral context, WHO needs to identify its niche based on its comparative advantage and position itself as a global health leader.

The WCO's human resource capacity does not appear to be commensurate with its mission.

Despite the widespread view that the WCO is underfunded, during the evaluation period there was under-spending in specific areas. This may be explained in part by staffing gaps as well as delays and unpredictability in receiving funds. Budgets are also characterized by the unpredictability of donor funding for several priority areas and activities, thus hampering programme planning.

The evaluation has shown a sufficient degree of technical complementarity and coordination at the three levels of the Organization in terms of providing technical support and capacity building to the Ministry of Health and national partners. Nonetheless, there have been some discrepancies in defining priorities as well as limitations in adopting shared objectives across the Organization, creating gaps in continuity and in meeting expectations. Furthermore, the fact that Dakar is the home of many regional offices of United Nations agencies and the venue for an increasing number of regional meetings, creates additional burden on an already-overstretched office.

## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** In order to address the more systemic and long-term needs of Senegal, the WHO Country Office in Senegal should ensure the alignment of the new Country Cooperation Strategy with the priorities set forth by the Government of Senegal, the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, the 2030 Agenda and the reform of the United Nations, concentrating on areas in which WHO has a comparative advantage.

**Recommendation 2:** WHO should strengthen at all levels of the Organization those core functions that would help deliver its mandate more effectively in Senegal.

**Recommendation 3:** The WHO Secretariat should ensure that the WHO Country Office in Senegal has the necessary human and financial resources to provide critical support to Senegal as it implements the Country Cooperation Strategy.

## Contacts

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Hyperlinks: [Evaluation report](#) and its Annexes.