**24 January 2017 | Geneva -** The World Health Organization's Executive Board, currently holding its 140th session in Geneva, has appointed Dr Mahmoud Fikri, from United Arab Emirates (UAE), as WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMRO), following his nomination by the Regional Committee for EMRO in October last year. Dr Fikri will take up his appointment for a five-year term starting on 1 February 2017.

Currently, Dr Fikri is adviser to the Minister of Health of United Arab Emirates and was previously the Assistant-Undersecretary for Preventive Medicine and Health Policies Affairs in the Ministry (1995–2013). He served as a Member of the Board of Directors of the WHO Centre for Health Development, "WHO Kobe Centre", Japan and a Member of the Advisory Board of the Gulf Health Council for Cooperation Council States (1996-2005). He was also a Member of the WHO Executive Board from 1997 to 2000.

For the last 19 years, Dr Fikri has been either a Member or the Head of UAE's Ministry of Health (MoH) Delegation to WHO's Health Assembly and the Regional Committee for EMRO.

Dr Fikri was a Member of the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Advisory Group during the period 2008-2011 when the open–ended working group of Member States worked to finalize the PIP Framework for sharing Influenza Viruses and Access to Vaccines and other Benefits.

He was responsible for upgrading and adapting the National Immunization Programme of UAE in line with the Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI) of WHO. Due to these efforts, the United Arab Emirates has achieved polio and malaria–free status.

Dr Fikri is a Member of the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs Standing Committee entrusted with the follow- up of the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights report (2009-2013) and a Member of the UAE National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking (2007-2013).

He was Head of UAE /MoH delegation to the UN High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) (2011).

Dr Fikri graduated in medicine and surgery from Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt in 1979. He holds a Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene from Liverpool School UK in 1984. He is a Member of the faculty of Public Health Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians UK (2000) and holder of a PHD in Medicine from the University of Medicine and Pharmacy Carol Devila, Romania.

EMRO comprises the following Member States: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.