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Date: 21 January 2020

Ms Ekaterine Tikaradze
Minister
Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the
Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social
Affairs
144, Ak. Tsereteli Ave.
Tbilisi 0119
Georgia

Dear Madam Tikaradze,

Focal point for a Coalition of Partners for Strengthening Public Health Services in Georgia

On behalf of WHO, please accept my sincere best wishes for the new year and the new decade. We look forward to our continued collaboration to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Georgia.

I write in the context of our joint effort to strengthen universal health coverage in Georgia and achieve target 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals. More specifically, I write about our efforts to strengthen public health services in Georgia. Within the scope of the 20-21 biennial collaborative agreement, Georgia and the WHO have agreed to collaborate on the establishment of a **Coalition of Partners for Strengthening Public Health Services in Georgia**, as a national chapter of the larger regional initiative known as **The Coalition of Partners for Strengthening Public Health Services in the European Region (CoP)**. In the enclosed document you can find more information on the CoP.

Against the backdrop of an ageing population, the rising costs of health care, an epidemic of non-communicable diseases and the ever-present threat of communicable disease outbreaks, there can be no doubt that the need to invest the public health services is as great now as it has ever been. At the regional level, the CoP brings together representatives of the multitude of different stakeholders and disciplines that constitute public health services, including leaders serving in national and subnational public health services, policy-makers, as well as colleagues serving in a number of international organizations.

Dr. Amiran Gamkrelidze, Director General of the National Center of Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC) was invited to attend the first meeting of the CoP in January 2017. Later Dr. Gamkrelidze appointed Ms. Natia Skhvitaridze, consultant in public health / global health at the NCDC, to represent him in CoP activities. During the CoP meeting in Ljubljana, 2018, Ms. Skhvitaridze became a member of the Core Team of the CoP. Together, the partners of the CoP are working to catalyse the establishment of national CoPs such as the one we are planning in Georgia. National CoPs function as national dialogue platforms that bring together the many stakeholders in public health services to adopt shared objectives, plan joint action, and share the learning from implementation.

In order to initiate the planning for the establishment of the Coalition of Partners in Georgia as well as the preliminary analyses, we would request that the ministry appoint a focal point to coordinate the collaboration with the WHO on this matter. Ideally the colleague in question will have participated in the activities of the regional CoP, as this previous exposure will make the collaboration much more effective and efficient. In this regard I wanted to draw your attention to the fact that Ms. Skhvitaridze could function well as the focal point for the CoP in Georgia. She has been representing Georgia in the regional CoP and has contributed substantially, she is intimately familiar with the methods of the CoP, and she has strong relationships with the colleagues involved. Furthermore, her functions at the NCDC align well with this task.

If you are in agreement with this proposal, I would appreciate if you could please respond directly to Dr Martin Kraye von Krauss, Senior Adviser in Public Health Services (vonkraussm@who.int), by February 14th.

Yours very truly,


Dr Pirooska Östlin
Regional Director ad interim

Encls:

Governance snapshot on the CoP

Copy for information to:

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H.E. Mr Gigi Gigiadze, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Embassy of Georgia, Kalvebod Brygge 45, Copenhagen 1560, Denmark

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