

Regional Training Course on Safe Hospitals and Hospital Preparedness

Background

The UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) and WHO have embarked on the 2008-2009 World Campaign on Hospitals Safe from Disasters. This reflects one of the five priorities of the Hyogo Framework of Action 2005-2015. A bi-regional launch was conducted in January of 2008 in Bangkok and the regional launch for the Western Pacific was organized August 2008 in Manila. The momentum gained because of the campaign is expected to sustain and mainstream disaster risk reduction into a broader array of health sector initiatives.

Hospitals, health facilities and health services are a community's lifeline in normal times and are especially critical in times of disaster. Many times however, they have been severely damaged or left unable to function in the aftermath of disasters.

Beyond the direct life-preserving roles they play, hospitals and all types of health facilities are also powerful symbols of social progress and a prerequisite for stability and economic development. Special attention must be given to ensuring their physical and functional integrity in emergency conditions.

Despite national efforts in the Region to mitigate and lower the impact of disasters from natural hazards, high mortality and morbidity are still common place during disasters. There is failure on two sides of the disaster response and preparedness spectrum: health facilities frequently fail as a consequence of natural disasters.

Further consideration is climate change. Disasters may be expected to increase in frequency and magnitude and their potential impact on health cannot be ignored.

Many health facilities are located in unsafe areas, and governments must understand the potential long term benefits of protection and good site selection. Ministries of Finance and Planning must also understand the need for improved design and construction standards and provide sufficient resources for maintenance and repair of health facilities.

WHO in fulfilling its commitment to support the campaign has embarked on a series of activities wherein Member States could actively participate in the efforts to make hospitals safer from disasters.

The European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid (DIPECHO) has provided funding to undertake a project on Safe Hospitals in key countries namely the Philippines, Vietnam, Lao PDR, and Cambodia. This project will help health sector staff engage local actors in these processes in a practical way and the outputs of this project will contribute input information to these processes and thus make them more relevant to end users in the health sector.

The issue of safe hospitals requires a long term and programmatic approach and the overall objectives of the Campaign cannot be reached within a 12 month implementation framework. Therefore, the current proposal puts forward interventions that are considered crucial in the start up or the initial roll-out of activities to further promote the concept/philosophy of ensuring hospitals/health facilities are safe and intact (structurally, non-structurally and functionally) in any emergency/disaster. Actions undertaken will lay the ground for further activities under the Campaign in the coming years and learning from the current project is expected to be replicated in the region.

OBJECTIVES OF SAFE HOSPITALS PROJECT

The Safe Hospitals Project aims to provide tools that enable government, communities and institutions to reduce their hospitals' and health facilities' risks from natural hazards and disasters. It aims to develop, test and publish tools and resources for the health sector to assess and address risks arising from natural hazards.

Specifically, it aims to accomplish the following:

- Publish tools for mapping the vulnerabilities of health sector's infrastructure
- Tools and guidelines of health sector disaster management
- Enhance capacity for disaster preparedness and response
- Assess structural and functional integrity of selected health facilities
- Raise awareness of the campaign for community leaders, private sector health staff, planners, decision makers, policy makers, and the general public.

Rationale

Several gaps have been identified. Local health managers, hospitals and other health facilities in identified, natural hazard-prone areas around the countries in the Region lack the capacity to respond to emergencies and are vulnerable to the negative impact of disasters themselves. Essential health services are usually disrupted after a disaster when health facilities are damaged or destroyed. Impact on the people is great when lack of knowledge, skills, and tools on disaster preparedness and emergency management is combined with

weak guidelines for safe construction and designs. Thus a training course on safe hospital and hospital preparedness was developed in early part of 2009.

Training Course on Safe Hospitals and Hospital Preparedness

As a component for capacity development, a training course was developed which is a take off from the Public Health and Emergency Management for Asia and the Pacific (PHEMAP) training courses offered at the international and national levels. This is "special" training course on safe hospitals.

The following activities were undertaken to develop this "special" course.

1. Course Development Meeting

A three day consultative workshop was organized to develop the course curriculum. The participants to this meeting included content specialists, curriculum designer, graphic designer and professionals involved in safe hospitals and hospital preparedness. The framework of the curriculum was then developed based on the competencies needed in hospital preparedness.

The modules shall be an adaptation of the hospital preparedness components of the regional training course on Mass Casualty Management and Hospital Preparedness.

2. Packaging of the Training Course

From the modules developed, a complete training package was developed.

The training package includes the following:

- Over view of the course
- Course modules
- Evaluation methodology

3. Pilot testing of the package in selected countries

The results of the pilot testing of the training package were utilized to finalize the modules of the package.

At the present, a pilot tested and revised training package is now available for a regional as well as national roll out. This training course has been offered in

the Philippines. Parts of the module were also used in a training workshop in Brunei.

Educational Goal of the Course

The course aims to provide health and health related professionals involved in health emergency management with deep understanding of the concepts, principles, and strategies in ensuring the safety of hospitals and health facilities during disasters. In addition, the policy makers are expected to provide the necessary policy and administrative support to the cause. On the part of the planning team, they are expected to be able to contribute to ensuring that the hospitals are functional during disasters. And finally they should serve as advocates and catalysts for safe hospitals in their own countries.

Objectives of the Training Course:

At the end of this training participants/teams will be able to:

1. Show appreciation on the importance of policy and administrative support in ensuring safe hospitals.
2. Prioritize gaps in the following safe hospital components:
 - Structural
 - Non structural
 - Functional
3. Prepare an action plan for identified gaps
4. Advocate for safe hospitals in their respective settings.

Participants

The countries to be involved are Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Philippines and Vietnam. The suggested members of the country teams (3 per country) are:

- policy makers from the Ministry of health and hospital officials
- planning team/disaster planning committee of hospitals which may include the chief nurse, chief of clinics, technical person responsible for emergency, administrative/facilities manager

In case the policy makers will not be able to participate for the entire duration of the course (three days), they are expected to be present during the whole day of the first day.

Tentative Date and venue:

October 2009, Cebu, Philippines (?)

Implementing Agency

SEAMEO Tropical Medicine and Public Health (SEAMEO TROPMED) Network in collaboration with WPRO will organize the training to include invitation, travel arrangements and organization of the training as well as secretariat services.

SEAMEO TROPMED Network is a regional cooperation network established in 1966 for education, training and research in tropical medicine and public health under the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization. The mission of SEAMEO TROPMED is to promote health and to prevent and/or control diseases, thus improving the living conditions of people through relevant programmes and services. One specific objective of the Network is to develop the capacity of individuals and institutions in delivering quality healthcare. The Network operates through the Regional Centre for Community Nutrition in Indonesia; Regional Centre for Microbiology, Parasitology and Entomology in Malaysia; Regional Centre for Public Health, Hospital Administration and Occupational Health in the Philippines; and Regional Centre for Tropical Medicine in Thailand. These Regional Centres are affiliated with academic and research institutions which provide the physical facilities, faculty and technical staff in respective Member Countries. A Network Coordinating Office is based in Bangkok, Thailand.