

Disaster Risk Reduction and Health in COVID-19 Pandemic

***Date: Wednesday 24 February 2021
2:00pm-3:30pm (Bangkok time)***

Background and Introduction

As one of the most devastating and widespread pandemics in recent history – the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of investing in multi-hazard disaster risk reduction, including disease outbreaks. While COVID-19 is a disaster with deep impacts on people’s health and health systems, its underlying factors, vulnerabilities and impacts go beyond the health sector impacting socioeconomic status of countries.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has confirmed the close link between health and disaster risk reduction and forced us to reflect on past practices, current capacities and plan for increasing investments to strengthen implementation of International Health Regulations (2005)¹ and the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030², as supported in the Bangkok Principles (2016). The Sendai Framework and the IHR (2005) together provide a basis for coherent action to facilitate building resilience and health security in communities and countries using the WHO Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management (EDRM)³ Framework that provides global guidance to countries on putting in place the capacities and functions within and across health and other sectors to reduce health emergency risks associated with all hazards including epidemics and pandemics, and their impacts. The Health EDRM framework supports the implementation of the IHR (2005), Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The EDRM and the Bangkok Principles ensure an integrated approach to disaster risk management planning.⁴

The Sendai Framework provides a bridge between the IHR (2005) and the SDGs. It calls for scaling-up capacities for all types of emergencies, including disease outbreaks, through inter-sectoral and inter-agency synergistic collaboration. The priority actions in the Sendai Framework have highlighted some actions for building resilient health systems and service delivery, which are key for tackling COVID-19 as well as other concurrent and future risks of emergencies and disasters including climate change impacts.

¹ <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241580496>

² <https://www.undrr.org/publication/sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-2015-2030>

³ <https://www.who.int/hac/techguidance/preparedness/health-emergency-and-disaster-risk-management-framework-eng.pdf?ua=1>

⁴ <https://www.unisdr.org/conferences/2016/health>

1. Investing in Health System Resilience and Disaster Risk Management for Health

- identify the risks including the vulnerabilities of communities
- Integrating DRR measures into primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare level;
- Developing the capacity of frontline health workers and improving their safety and security;
- Enhancing training and learning in disaster medicine;
- Supporting community health groups in DRR and enhancing the coordination with other sectors;
- Implementation of the IHR (2005)

2. Safe Hospitals

- Strengthening the safety (structural, non-structural and functional capacities) and preparedness of health facilities providing critical essential health services
- Evaluation of emergency health supply chain system for un-interrupted end-to-end supply
- Ensuring safety and security of health caregivers

3. Continued Access to Essential Health Services

- Sustained and un-hindered access to basic routine essential health services and public health programmes during emergencies (maternal, new born & child health, sexual and reproductive health, immunization, acute medical emergencies etc.)
- Continued access to treatment for chronic health conditions; especially non-communicable diseases (diabetes, chronic renal failure, hypertension, drugs and substance abuse rehabilitation etc.)

4. Psychosocial Support and Mental Health

- Community-based interventions

5. Improving Data and Early Warning systems

- Improved age, gender and disability dis-aggregated impact data (morbidity as well as mortality)
- Multi-hazards forecasting, early warning and early action

6. Research and innovation

At the sub-regional level, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) convened a Senior Leaders' Summit on COVID-19 in 2020, besides meetings of the Health and Foreign Ministers⁵. Member States have agreed to strengthen public health cooperation measures, develop ASEAN-wide guidelines on public health emergencies and develop a COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund. Similarly, Member States of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) agreed to formulate a regional strategy on COVID-19 response, including through a SAARC COVID-19 Information Exchange Platform and established a COVID-19 Emergency Fund⁶.

⁵ https://asean.org/?static_post=updates-asean-health-sector-efforts-combat-novel-coronavirus-covid-19

⁶ <http://www.covid19-sdmc.org/>

High-level political commitment from the Member States was expressed through the “Delhi Declaration on Emergency Preparedness” that was endorsed in the Seventy-Second Session of the WHO Regional Committee for the South-East Asia Region in September 2019 and aligned with Health EDRM Framework. It has emphasized four areas:

- (i) identification of risks;
- (ii) investing in people and systems for risk management;
- (iii) implementing plans; and
- (iv) interlinking sectors and networks.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further invoked and inspired the commitment of Member States to infuse resilience into systems and service delivery for emergency and multi-hazards risks management through the recent ministerial level Declaration “WHO South-East Asia Region Member States’ Declaration on Collective Response to COVID-19” in the Seventy-third Session of the WHO Regional Committee meeting in September 2020. At its meeting in July 2020, the UN Senior Leadership Group for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience also made recommendations on how the UN system can apply key emerging lessons from COVID-19 and guide the UN’s collective actions to build resilience across the whole of society for the implementation of the Sendai Framework, the International Health Regulations and WHO Health EDRM Framework. The WHO Director General has reinforced that the Health EDRM Framework as WHO’s guidance to countries on managing risks of emergencies and disasters and the Sendai Framework.

It is important to align risk management efforts of health ministries, disaster risk management organisations and all sectors and stakeholders working to reduce the risks and impacts of emergencies and disasters.

Considering the ongoing context; changed priorities, needs and learned lessons from the complex emergency of the unprecedented scale of the COVID-19 pandemic with its sector-wide consequences, it has become essential to bring together all the stakeholders involved in emergency risk management for better outcomes of health and well-being.

UNDRR and WHO are organizing a webinar to highlight the existing tools to enhance the integration of disaster risk reduction in all sectors to manage health-related risks including for disease outbreaks, as a key example of a multi-sectoral approach to disaster risk management.

Objectives of the Webinar

The webinar will:

1. Present the WHO Health EDRM Framework and the steps to support its implementation with a whole-of-society and all-hazards approach to manage risks from all types of emergencies and disasters
2. Present the Bangkok Principles and the steps in supporting the implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR and the WHO Health EDRM Framework
3. Recommend key actions to enhance the promotion and implementation of integrated all-hazards disaster risk management by all sectors and stakeholders; and
4. Recommend measures to strengthen whole-of-society disaster risk governance for joint action to reduce the risks and impacts of disease outbreaks, including future pandemics, through regional, national and local strategies for disaster risk management.

The webinar outcomes will inform the 2021 Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Date: Wednesday, 24 February 2021

Venue: Online Zoom application: https://undrr.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_0wg9weQ9Q8e07rqrH8UnEQ

Organizers

- UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP); and
- World Health Organisation (WHO) South-East Asia Regional Office (SEARO).

Target Audience

- Asia Pacific Sendai Framework Focal Points and National Disaster Management Officials.
- Health Sector Stakeholders
- WHO, UNDRR and other UN Agencies

Language Requirements:

The workshop will be conducted in English.

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Time	24 February 2021
2:00pm – 2:15pm	<p><u>Welcome and Opening Remarks</u></p> <p><u>Welcome from Moderator:</u></p> <p><u>Opening remarks:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WHO – Dr. Qudsia Huda, Head- WHO HQ DRR Unit - UNDRR – Dr. Animesh Kumar, Acting Chief ROAP, UNDRR
2:15pm – 2:40pm	<p><u>Overview of EDRM and Bangkok Principles</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation by Mr. Timothy Wilcox, Programme Management Officer (UNDRR) on the Bangkok Principles (5 minutes) - Presentation by Dr. Anil Bhola, Consultant- H EDRM, (WHO SEARO) on the Health EDRM Framework (5 minutes) - Moderated Q&A (10 minutes)
2:40pm – 3:10pm	<p><u>Panel Discussion – Experiences in integrating DRR and Health during COVID-19</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>India</u> - Mr. Kamal Kishore, Member of the National Disaster Management Authority, (5 minutes) - <u>Mongolia</u> - Ms. Bazarragchaa Duudgai, Senior Specialist, Disaster Risk Management Department, National Emergency Management Agency, (5 minutes) - <u>Maldives</u> - Mr. Hisan Hassan, Chief Executive, National Disaster Management Authority, (5 minutes) - <u>Thailand</u> - Ms. Pannapa Na Nan, Director of International Cooperation Section Research and International Cooperation Bureau Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, (5 minutes) - <u>ASEAN Secretariat</u> - Dr. Riyanti Djalante, Assistant Director for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (5 Minutes)

<p>3:10pm – 3:25pm</p>	<p><u>Open Forum – Way Forward</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderated Open Forum for audience and panellists to ask questions and discuss issues raised during webinar.
<p>3:25pm – 3:30pm</p>	<p><u>Close of Webinar</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing Remarks

Annex: Bangkok Principles for the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework

1. Promote systematic integration of health into national and sub-national disaster risk reduction policies and plans and the inclusion of emergency and disaster risk management programmes in national and sub-national health strategies.
2. Enhance cooperation between health authorities and other relevant stakeholders to strengthen country capacity for disaster risk management for health, the implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) and building of resilient health systems.
3. Stimulate people-centered public and private investment in emergency and disaster risk reduction, including in health facilities and infrastructure.
4. Integrate disaster risk reduction into health education and training and strengthen capacity building of health workers in disaster risk reduction.
5. Incorporate disaster-related mortality, morbidity and disability data into multi-hazards early warning system, health core indicators and national risk assessments.
6. Advocate for, and support cross-sectoral, transboundary collaboration including information sharing, and science and technology for all hazards, including biological hazards.
7. Promote coherence and further development of local and national policies and strategies, legal frameworks, regulations, and institutional arrangements.

https://www.preventionweb.net/files/47606_bangkokprinciplesfortheimplementati.pdf