



Name of Event: [Featured Event] Protecting Public Health and Disaster Risks

Date of Event: May 11, 2011

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Panellists:

- Prof. Virginia Murray, Head of Extreme Events and Health Protection, Health Protection Agency, United Kingdom (Chair)
- Dr. Stefan Seebacher, Head of Health Department, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- Mr. Mudjiharto, Head of Crisis Center, Ministry of Health, Indonesia
- Dr. Jean-Luc Poncelet, Area Manager, Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief, Pan American Health Organization
- Dr. Alistair Humphrey, Medical Officer of Health, Ministry of Health, New Zealand
- Mr. Jonathan Abrahams, Coordinator, Risk Reduction and Emergency Preparedness, World Health Organization, Geneva

1) Outline

The protection of public health from disasters requires joint action from all sectors at all levels of society and is a high priority for disaster reduction. A multi-sectoral proactive approach to disaster risk management will build resilience and reduce immediate and long-term effects on health in terms of significant loss of life, injuries, disease, disability, damage to health facilities and disruption of health services.

2) Key messages, outcomes, recommendations

Recommended that the Chair's Summary recognize important developments and the following recommendations:

- Commend the launching of the Joint Statement on Scaling-up the Community-based Health Workforce for Emergencies, highlighting the vital role of community health workers, including volunteers, in disaster risk reduction, and calling for Governments and all partners to invest in strengthening their capacity.

- Recognise significant progress on safe hospitals across the world with over 42 countries with Safe Hospitals programmes and more than 680 health facilities assessed.
- Recommend redoubling efforts by all sectors to meet the 2009 Global Platform target that all countries should have Safe Hospitals programmes by 2015 and the Hyogo Framework for Action objective that all new health facilities should be built safely by 2015
- Recognise the 2011-2012 Global Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Management for Health was presented on behalf of the multisectoral thematic platform on disaster risk management for health to support the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.
- Promote active participation of the disaster risk reduction community in the thematic platform for health.

3) Conclusions

Recommendations were as above. The chair thanked speakers and participants for sharing good examples of building community resilience through a focus on health. The experience from Canterbury, New Zealand illustrated how community preparedness for pandemic influenza had built self-reliance for subsequent earthquakes. Indonesia demonstrated the depth and breadth of capacity development activities in the health sector as part of the multi-sectoral approach since the tsunami in 2004. Demonstrable progress had been made on Safer Hospitals which was a succinct, tangible, measurable HFA achievement. The thematic platform was clarified as a forum for advocating an all-hazard, multi-sectoral approach to disaster risk management for health, and now has a Global Plan of Action to support implementation of the HFA. All session attendees were encouraged to remain active participants in the thematic platform for health.