

## **WHO Thematic Platform on Health Emergency & Disaster Risk Management Research Network**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **Background**

1. The growing frequency, intensity and diversity of hazards worldwide are resulting in significant negative impacts on all people's health globally. Meanwhile, global recognition of the importance of health as both an outcome and a goal of disaster risk management has increased over recent years. Health is referenced frequently throughout the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030<sup>1</sup> (hereafter referred to as the "Sendai Framework"), with four of the seven global targets directly relating to health.

2. A dedicated group of stakeholders from a wide range of disciplines, as well as governmental, academic and institutions and organisations has emerged to focus on the research, policy and practice in Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management for Health (hereafter referred to as "Health-EDRM", a diverse field which encompasses emergency and disaster medicine, disaster risk reduction, multi-hazard emergency preparedness, humanitarian response and health systems strengthening). There is consensus that the substance relates to the intersection of health and emergency risk management and is of critical importance to the successful implementation of the Sendai Framework and national strategies for disaster risk management, as well as making substantial contributions to allied global and regional frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals, International Health Regulations (2005) and Paris Agreement for Climate Change.

3. The Thematic Platform on Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management was launched by WHO and UNISDR in 2009 as an international, multi-agency platform to advocate, share information and catalyse action for Health EDRM. A meeting held in Geneva, in January 2016, examined the status of Health EDRM research, knowledge and evidence. This meeting highlighted the vast challenges facing the academic and research community in this area, including overlap in research activities, lack of strategic research agenda, lack of coordination between key stakeholders, and lack of resources.

4. A follow-up meeting held in Hong Kong SAR, China in September 2016, attended by a group of Thematic Platform participants, discussed the need for a research network devoted to focus on research development and comprising members from different backgrounds, sectors and disciplines. The WHO Official Statement to the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Cancun, Mexico, in May 2017, recognised the "development of WHO Thematic Platform for Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management Research Group [that] brings together representatives of Member States and academia who are committed to strengthening the evidence base for health policy and practice".

5. These Terms of Reference outline the governance aspects of the "WHO Thematic Platform for Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management Research Network" (hereafter referred to as the "TPRN"), established by WHO as a subgroup to the Thematic Platform.

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.unisdr.org/files/43291\\_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf](https://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf)

## **Objectives**

6. The TPRN aims to serve as an international multi-stakeholder and inter-disciplinary platform to exchange information, share views and advise WHO in the area of Health EDRM research and evidence-related activities in general and on the following issues in particular:

- a) the development of information sharing platforms on research and activities relating to Health EDRM being undertaken across the world;
- b) the development of partnerships between stakeholders to enhance the scientific and technical work on Health EDRM, influence the international Health EDRM research agenda and advocate for greater health input within the wider DRR community;
- c) the provision of technical advice and review of guidance for Health EDRM research initiatives and the standardisation of related programmes; and
- d) the provision of support to the WHO in other aspects of its Health EDRM work, where applicable.

## **Status**

The TPRN is not an independent legal entity but a collaborative mechanism between WHO and other participants of the TPRN.

For this reason, the TPRN cannot conduct any action in its own name or in the name of WHO.

The operation of the TPRN shall in all respects be administered in accordance with the WHO Constitution, WHO's Financial and Staff Regulations and Rules, Manual provisions, and applicable policies, procedures and practices.

## **Participation**

The TPRN is open to participation by any Participant of the WHO Thematic Platform for Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management.

Participation in the TPRN shall not be considered as an engagement with WHO, nor should it be considered as endorsement by WHO of the participant of the TPRN, or its name, brand, products, views or activities.

A participant may not use the fact of its participation in the TPRN for commercial or promotional purposes.

Participants of the TPRN will promote its objectives and abide by these Terms of Reference.

## **Secretariat**

Subject to the availability of sufficient human and financial resources for this purpose, secretariat for the TPRN is provided by WHO, acting through the WHO Health Emergencies Programme ("WHE"). WHO may seek the assistance of Participants to support WHO in fulfilling the role of Secretariat.

The WHO focal point for disaster risk management facilitates the operation of the TPRN and serves as the focal point for external contacts.

## **Meetings**

The participants of the TPRN may utilize face-to-face meetings and electronic communication methods for the exchange of information related to the work of the TPRN. The need for face-to-face meetings of the TPRN will be determined by the Secretariat that will, in its discretion, convene such meetings and develop the related meeting agenda.

Forums, such as the Global Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction, other related meetings including those hosted by Participants and web-based interaction, may also be used by participants to share their views, experience and initiatives with the health EDRM management community.

The outcome of TPRN discussions shall be of an advisory nature and shall not be binding on WHO, the Thematic Platform, or any other Participant.

The meetings of the TPRN will be chaired, as appropriate, either by WHO or another participant of TPRN designated by WHO to chair such meetings. This designation may be terminated at any time by WHO, if WHO's interest so requires.

### **Publications**

Any publication on the work of the TPRNs subject to WHO's rules on publication.

As a general rule and subject to its discretion, WHO shall be responsible for issuing publications about TPRN activities. Dissemination of TPRN materials will only be made by WHO or as may be decided by WHO on a case-by-case basis.

Copyright in any publication made by WHO shall be vested in WHO. This also applies if the work is issued by WHO and is a compilation of works by Participants or is otherwise work prepared with input from one or more Participants. Copyright in a specific separable work prepared by a Participant shall remain vested in that Participant (or remain in the public domain, if applicable), even if it forms part of another work that is published by WHO and of which WHO owns the copyright as a whole.

Copyright in a publication prepared and issued by a Participant shall remain vested in that Participant or shall be put in the public domain if such Participant so chooses.

"Publications" include any form, whether paper or electronic, and in any manner. Participants are always allowed to cite or refer to TPRN publications, except for purpose of promoting any commercial products, services or entities.

Any publication about TPRN activities issued by a Participant other than WHO shall contain appropriate disclaimers as decided by WHO, including that the content does not necessarily reflect the views or stated policy of the participating organizations, agencies and institutions (including WHO, acting as the Secretariat for the TPRN).

### **Core Group**

WHO will convene a Core Group to facilitate the development of the TPRN, the realization and implementation of its objectives, as well as the coordination of its activities.

The membership of the Core Group will be selected by WHO from among the participants of the TPRN and the number of members shall not exceed 15.

The Core Group will meet on a quarterly basis, as appropriate, through teleconference or on the margin of other related meetings.

The meetings of the Core Group will be chaired, as appropriate, either by WHO or another member of the Core Group designated by WHO to chair such meetings. This designation may be terminated at any time by WHO, if WHO's interest so requires.

**Contributions**

Contributions of participants to the activities of the TPRN may be in the form of financial support, in-kind contributions, information, and/or technical expertise. Such contributions made by participants of the TPRN will be acknowledged by WHO in accordance with its applicable rules, policies and practices.

**General**

The provisions of the Terms of Reference of the WHO Thematic Platform for Health Emergency & Disaster Risk Management shall, *mutatis mutandis*, apply to the TPRN, in particular with respect to publications, financing, termination, liability, unless these Terms of Reference provide or WHO decides otherwise.

WHO may at any time review and amend, if needed, these Terms of Reference. Participants of the TPRN shall be informed of such amendments.