WHO helps ensure the regular cross-sectoral review of countries’ core capacities as required under the International Health Regulations (IHR); and the development of National Action Plans for Health Security (NAPHS). This is done through the provision of support for national assessments, risk profiling and after action reviews; planning, costing, documentation, and simulation exercises; and building monitoring and evaluating capacity with a One Health approach.

WHO REGIONAL STRATEGIC PREPAREDNESS AND READINESS PLAN FOR EBOLA VIRUS DISEASES (EVD) OUTBREAK

On 3 May 2018, the Provincial Health Division of Equateur, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) reported 21 cases of fever with haemorrhagic signs including 17 community deaths in the Ikoko-Impenge Health Area in this region. The Ministry of Health in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) notified WHO country office of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in Bikoro health zone, Equateur province on 8 May 2018.

As of 31 May 2018, there are a total of 50 cases (37 confirmed, 13 probable) and 25 deaths. The ongoing outbreak poses a significant risk of spread to countries neighbouring the Republic Democratic of Congo. WHO Regional Office for Africa (AFRO) and Headquarters (HQ) have identified nine countries, where support will be provided to scale up preparedness for Ebola Viral Disease (EVD). The countries are: Angola, Burundi, Central Africa Republic, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The countries were prioritized based on the findings of EVD checklist and the operational readiness capacities and the results of the Joint External Evaluations (7 countries).

WHO developed a strategic plan to strengthen preparedness in all 9 countries to scale up operational capacities in the high risk areas including at points of entries. WHO is working closely with the countries and partners to implement this plan by prioritizing and identifying gaps and strengthening capacities to
The After Action Review that took place in Peshawar, captured the lessons learned from the response to the Dengue outbreak of June-December 2017, with the aim of improving future actions through analysis of identified best practices and challenges. The AAR covered five key areas: surveillance and laboratory; case management and infection prevention and control; risk communication including community engagement; vector surveillance and control; coordination including the functionality of the incident management system; and resource mobilization.

The meeting gathered approximately 80 participants from national, provincial and district levels who had been involved in the response including health and other departments such as police, water/sanitation, education, local government, agriculture and environment. Private health care providers, NGOs, UN agencies and partners had participated in the AAR.

The meeting included detailed discussions on the existing capacities of health systems to prevent, detect, and respond to Dengue outbreak; timeline of response interventions; best practices and their enabling factors; along with challenges and their limiting factors. The resulting recommendations were converted into targeted activities to be integrated in the provincial action plan for dengue and vector borne diseases.
Delegates welcomed with appreciation a proposed five-year global strategic plan to improve public health preparedness and response, through implementation of the International Health Regulations.

The International Health Regulations (IHR) are an international legal instrument that is binding on 196 countries across the world, including all WHO Member States of WHO. Their aim is to help the international community prevent, detect, assess, notify and respond to acute public health risks that have the potential to cross borders and threaten people worldwide.

The IHR, which entered into force on 15 June 2007, require countries to report certain disease outbreaks and public health events to WHO. The IHR define the rights and obligations of countries to report public health events, and establish a number of procedures that WHO must follow in its work to uphold global public health security.

In 2017, WHO recorded a total of 418 public health events in its event management system: the initial source in reporting 136 of these was national government agencies, including National IHR Focal Points. The new strategy aims to help countries strengthen and monitor the core capacities they need to implement the regulations, including more reporting through IHR.

GLOBAL WORKSHOP ON STRATEGIC RISK ANALYSIS AND PROFILING FOR HEALTH EMERGENCIES, 9-11 MAY 2018, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND
The three-day (9-11 May 2018) “Global Training Workshop on “Strategic Risk Analysis and Profiling for Health Emergencies”, concluded in Geneva underscoring the need for a global working group to provide guidance on health emergency risk assessment, analysis and profiling. The training workshop was attended by the participants from five WHO Regions and country offices, WHO’s Health Emergencies Program (WHE) departments in Headquarters and partner organizations including UNISDR, OCHA, CDC Atlanta.

The participants discussed the different methodologies already being used by countries and WHO for assessing, prioritizing and analysing risks and vulnerabilities. It was acknowledged that different types of risk assessments are used by health and other sectors for different purposes. It is therefore important to ensure that everyone uses the same approach methodology for better planning, resources allocation and monitoring of the implementation of the priority actions. The participants highlighted the need for a comprehensive framework for all hazards health emergency risk assessment and also an inventory of all available tools/methodologies for easy reference. They agreed on the need for a global approach to harmonize the methodologies and recommended that a working group to be formed with participation from the regions, countries, other WHE departments and partners to provide guidance on harmonization of various risk assessment methodologies. The participants also agreed on the need for ‘quick’ strategic risk assessment to generate evidence for planning and implementation of emergency preparedness and response. It was agreed that the existing WHO Strategic Tool for Assessing Risk (STAR) tool continues to provide the information on risks and their prioritization.

Following the workshop, the training was conducted on the “WHO STAR tool”. This tool has been used in already in 28 countries in different WHO regions to identify and prioritizing risks and led to the development of emergency preparedness, response and contingency plans, and their implementation.

This workshop was a key step toward the development of trained workforce capacities across WHE and in all regions for conducting risk analysis, and developing and updating country risk profiles.
COMING UP NEXT

> Best Practices in Implementing International Health Regulations, 07-08 June 2018, Athens, Greece


For an update on the IHR monitoring, evaluation and planning activities, please read the weekly update or visit the Strategic Partnership Portal at: https://extranet.who.int/spp/

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WHO International Health Regulations website - http://www.who.int/ihr/procedures/implementation/en/
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