

Platform for WHO operations on Outbreaks and Emergencies with Health and Humanitarian Consequences¹²:

An Outline of the Concept: 19th August 2015

Prepared for Second Meeting of the Advisory Group on WHO's work in Outbreaks and Emergencies:

Overall Vision:

Contribute to a world in which effective, collective action reduces the frequency and minimizes the impact of health emergencies

WHO Mission:

To support Member States as they strengthen the capabilities of their people to manage risks to health, to reduce the frequency of health emergencies;

To coordinate and provide strategic direction for responses to international health emergencies across the spectrum of emergency risk management (including readiness, response and recovery and able to address health risks from all hazards).

Scope (what the Platform will do?)

1. General Principles

- Ensure that necessary structures, mechanisms, resources and all other enabling factors are in place for WHO – in combination with national authorities and relevant partners
 - to deliver timely, effective and efficient responses when needed;
- Serve as the mechanism through which WHO engages operationally in different stages of managing risks associated with health emergencies Ensure that the platform works as a single entity across 3 levels of the Organization
- Work across the “spectrum” of health emergencies – preparedness (including Organizational readiness), response, early recovery
- Address health emergencies due to all hazards
- Work within individual countries or across multiple countries
- Establish links with WHO clusters and departments with relevant expertise required in some health emergencies (Health Systems, Reproductive, Mental health and others)
- Impact of reform must be felt at country/district level during health emergency

2. Preparedness:

¹ The term “Platform” replaces the word “Programme” which was used by the Director General to introduce the concept during her speech to the World Health Assembly in May 2015: it encompasses much that is in the “Centre” proposed in the July 2015 report of the Interim Assessment of the WHO Ebola Response.

² The term “Health Emergencies” in this document is shorthand for “Outbreaks and Emergencies with Health and Humanitarian Consequences”

- Ensure that preparedness including risk management is integrated into the response platform in a manner that ensures seamless transition and collaboration at all times
- Develop of evidence and policy for health emergencies
- Risk analysis; collation and dissemination of surveillance data and other relevant health information
- Assure WHO institutional readiness and response capacity

3. Response

- Adopt an effective incident management system appropriate to individual emergencies, operating from an effective SHOC
- Support national authorities with overall coordination of national and international health assistance
- Facilitate or undertake rapid risk assessments/investigations; identify major health needs and response priorities
- Manage partnerships
- Consolidate, analyse, interpret and disseminate data to guide response work and recovery planning
- Deploy technical experts to guide and where require, provide public health and clinical services
- Support effective community engagement, through contextual analysis and working with relevant partners
- Communicate effectively on health in emergencies

4. Early recovery

- Ensure appropriate contributions to early recovery of resilient health systems

How the Platform will work:

1. Platform Structure: The platform ...

- Will be a unified entity for support to operations covering all hazards and fit-for-purpose to enable effective readiness for and response to humanitarian emergencies, public health emergencies, or other hazards such as environmental, radiation, chemical and migration that may require different types response types;
- Will have a single common structure, aligned across HQ and 6 Regional Offices;
- Will be suitable for delivering the functions identified in “Scope” above, including
 - o Surveillance, information
 - o Capacity building for preparedness
 - o WHO institutional readiness and response, including core functions;
- Will have a physical presence in countries with protracted crises, recurrent emergencies and high vulnerability for health emergencies;

2. The Platform will enable WHO Regional Offices and Headquarters to assist countries which do not have a standing health emergency capacity:
 - Management processes, supported by new business rules/systems and SOPS will ensure effective strategic planning, work planning and budgeting, human resource planning/supervision, resource mobilization, field operations, monitoring and evaluation
 - Business systems/rules informed by best practices in other multilateral, non-governmental and humanitarian emergency organizations; strategic and operational partnerships will be formed as appropriate
3. The Platform will be based on a Revised Emergency Response Framework: this will reflect
 - Analyses of the use of the ERF in recent health emergencies;
 - An improved grading process;
 - An enhanced system for oversight in major health emergency responses;
 - Clarification of WHO decision making in health emergencies, including establishment of incident management system at all levels of the Organization to guide country responses;
 - Ensuring that the “no regrets policy” is understood and followed
4. Human resources during Health Emergencies:
 - Human resource deployments must include human resources in the right numbers, with the right skills, deployed at the right time, to the right places, for an appropriate duration;
 - The platform will
 - o Support a Global Health Emergency Workforce, at global and country level; should include assets provided by GOARN, the Global Health Cluster, Foreign Medical Teams, other standby partners;
 - o Be based on reorganized WHO organizational structures at HQ, RO to ensure that all current staff relevant to the scope of WHO work in health emergencies are brought into the unified Programme;
 - o Assure that WHO is able to deploy its own staff to support response and early recover during health emergencies.
 - IT systems should support an integrated HR management system – active between and during health emergencies – to underpin the platform.
5. Financing for health emergencies
 - The platform will require core financing (for standing capacity and normative work), additional funds for building capabilities and dedicated finance for responses to health emergencies;
 - A Contingency Fund is being established and capitalized to support response in health emergencies;

- WHO will contribute to the operation of the global Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility designed to ensure global access to funds for health emergencies

6. Partnerships

- WHO will improve its capacity to engage partners at global, and especially at country level during health emergencies;
- Functional partnerships with other UN agencies and partners (UNICEF, WFP, OCHA, IFRC MSF etc) will be strengthened to ensure predictable operational responses in health emergencies.
