

WHO Emergency Reform News

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Advisory Group report recommends actions to be taken on WHO outbreak and emergency reform



Following its first face-to-face meeting on 19-21 October, the Advisory Group on the reform of WHO's work in outbreaks and emergencies issued its **first report** on what should be the Organization's focus, role and working relationships with partners and other stakeholders engaged in health crises.

The Advisory Group issued a set of recommendations to the WHO Director-General for immediate action. These included reaffirming WHO's commitment to strengthened leadership of the Global Health Cluster, and to more active engagement with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. It also called for the restructuring of WHO to enable it to lead and support collective efforts in outbreaks and emergencies, with the establishment of the single Programme, its Platform for response operations and the centralization of the budget and of accountability for its work.

In this vein, the WHO Director-General, on 4 November, announced the merger of the Organization's Health Security Cluster and Emergencies Cluster to create the Cluster for Outbreaks and Health Emergencies (OHE), which will form the basis for the future integrated Programme and Platform.

The new OHE Cluster will be led by Executive Director (ai) Dr Bruce Aylward, the WHO Director-General's Special Representative for the Ebola Response, who will continue in this role.

For an overview on the WHO outbreak and emergency reform process, watch this [video](#).

WHO heads of country offices provide feedback into the process of reform of Organizations work in outbreaks and emergencies with health consequences



Heads of WHO Country Offices from around the world met in Geneva on 10-11 November to discuss and have a common understanding of the Organization's role at field level in addressing outbreaks and public health emergencies, based on lessons learnt.

During the meeting, the WHO country Representatives provided first-hand experiences and detailed challenges and opportunities for strengthening the Organization's work in outbreaks and emergencies.

The Regional Directors for WHO's Eastern Mediterranean and South-East Asia Regional Offices, Dr Ala Alwan and Dr Poonam Singh, co-chaired a session on improving the Organization's response to emergencies and outbreaks,

during which they underlined the great pressures that the Organization faced in responding to multiple concurrent emergencies, and how enhanced capacities and better preparedness are needed to ensure WHO can deliver on its mandate in responding to crises.

The WHO Representatives provided detailed advice on areas that required improvement for the Organization to be more effective in the field, from improved prowess in coordinating in emergencies to streamlined administrative and financial procedures to enable rapid response.

WHO briefs Member States on the Contingency Fund for Emergencies, receives contributions from Germany and China



WHO's Member States have been playing a leading role in advising and shaping the ongoing reform process in recent weeks. On 5-6 November, WHO staged the WHO Financing Dialogues meeting, during which the flexible, replenishable WHO **Contingency Fund for Emergencies** (CFE) was presented to Member States. **China** and **Germany** have provided the first signed contributions to the fund, while the United Kingdom and India have also committed to supporting the fund.

The CFE is designed to provide funds to support WHO's initial response to outbreaks and emergencies. The CFE will provide funding during a critical gap - between the moment the need for an emergency response is identified, and the point at which resources from other financing mechanisms begin to flow.

On 12 October, WHO Member States attended the **fifth informal consultation** on the ongoing process to reform WHO's work in outbreaks and emergencies.

The discussion was structured around four points: (1) the provision of WHO Regional- and country-level feedback on the emergency reform process; (2) an update of the work of the Director-General's Advisory Group on Reform of WHO's Work in Outbreaks and Emergencies with Health and Humanitarian Consequences; (3) a review and discussion of the Roadmap for Action; and (4) an update on the Contingency Fund for Emergencies.

The next informal consultation between the WHO Secretariat and Member States is scheduled for 4 December.

Governments sign up to new WHO emergency medical team coordination methodology, strengthening surge medical support in sudden onset disasters.



WHO has launched a pilot course aimed at strengthening national and international medical teams capacity to respond to sudden onset disasters, marking a milestone in the roll-out of the WHO emergency medical teams initiative.

The WHO Emergency Medical Team (EMT) Coordination Cell Training Course, hosted by the Australian National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre, was held in Darwin, Australia, from 26-30 October. Twenty-one participants attended from across the Asia-Pacific region, including Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, the Republic of Korea, and the Philippines.

One of the course trainers, WHO EMT Secretariat staff member Bronte Martin, said that the training was not only a

good opportunity to bring together and learn from key players from the Asia-Pacific region, but that it marked an important step in working with countries prone to sudden on-set disasters to embed a methodology that emphasizes the important role that coordination plays in the immediate aftermath of a large scale event.

"Recent responses have clearly demonstrated effective coordination of medical teams saves lives so if we can build a cadre of coordination cell members that have experience working together as a team that is a positive step forward," Bronte said.

The training also aligns more broadly with the work being undertaken as a part of WHO's reform of its work in outbreaks and emergencies, specifically with the development of the Global Health Emergency Workforce.

The response to the 2015 Nepal earthquake marked the first use of all components of the EMT coordination cell methodology, the development of which has included lessons learned from numerous other health emergencies, including this year's Cyclone Pam that hit Vanuatu, the West Africa Ebola outbreak and the 2013 Typhoon Haiyan crisis that struck the Philippines. The Darwin training was the first time that the methodology had been delivered as a defined training package.

Another major event will be the second EMT Global Meeting being held in Panama on 1-3 December, during which over 150 participants will descend on Panama City to engage on discussion around EMTs and WHO's ongoing outbreak and emergency reform process.

Upcoming events

- 24-27 November: WHO workshops on emergency communications and community engagement, Geneva
- 1-3 December: 2nd Emergency Medical Teams global meeting, Panama
- 4 December: Member States briefing on the outbreak and emergencies, Geneva

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