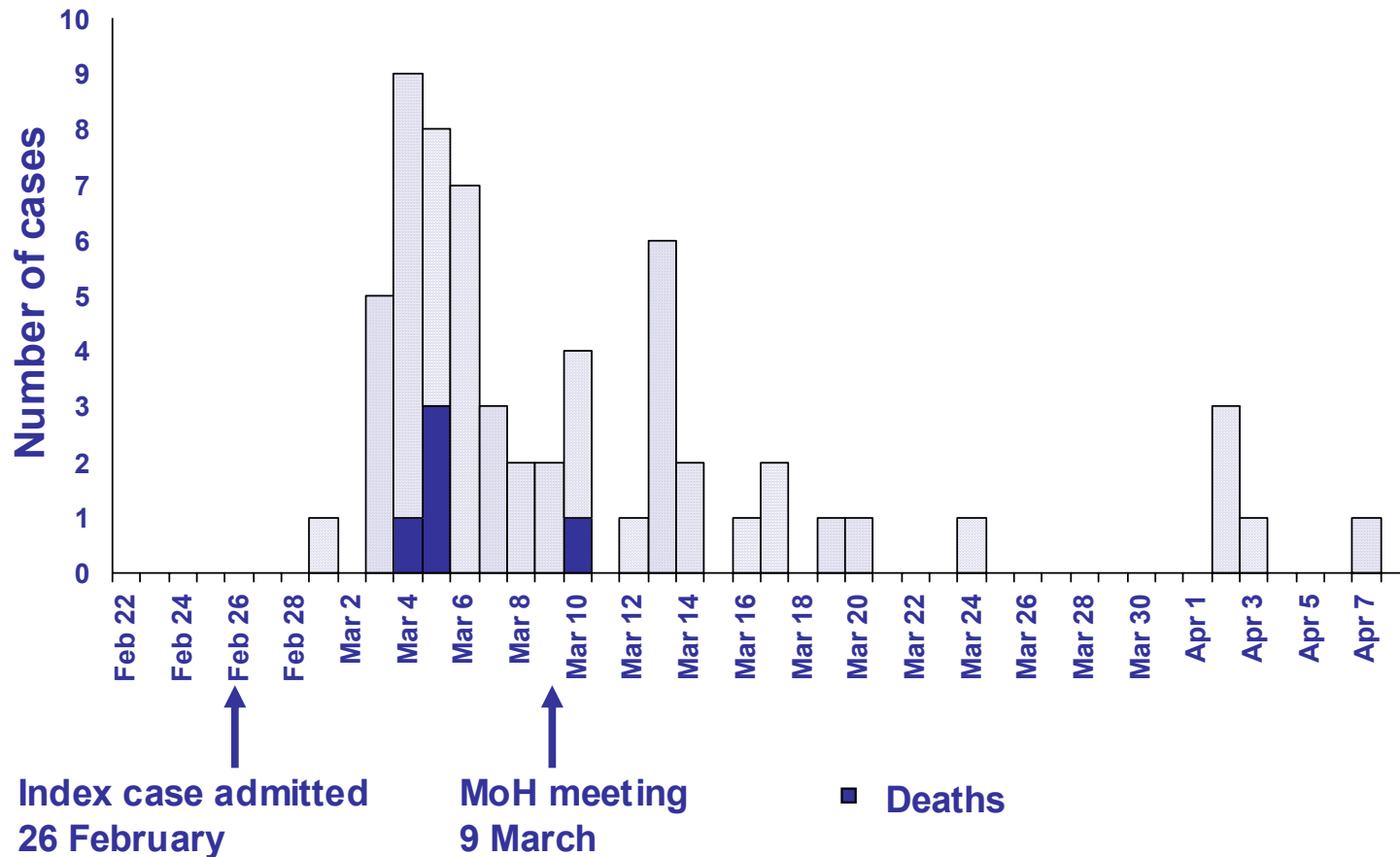


Strong Political Commitment and Speed of Action - Key to Success in SARS Containment in Vietnam

A presentation by
Prof. Nguyen Van Thuong
Vice Minister of Health of Vietnam at the
WHO Global Conference on SARS
Kuala Lumpur 17-18 June 2003

SARS Vietnam: Feb-Mar 2003

Number of cases by date of onset





Strong Political Commitment and Speed of Action, Vietnam Key to Success

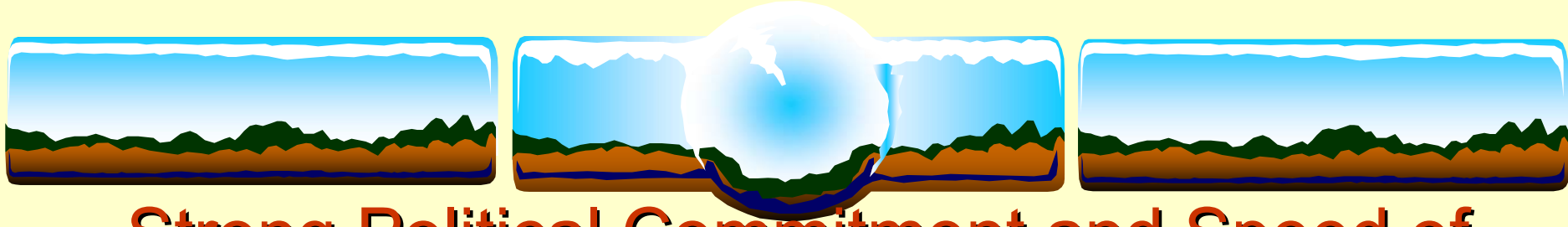
The most 3 important factors:

- 1. Strong political commitment and speed of action,**
- 2. Appropriate technical measures to control SARS,**
- 3. International Cooperation and the role of WHO.**



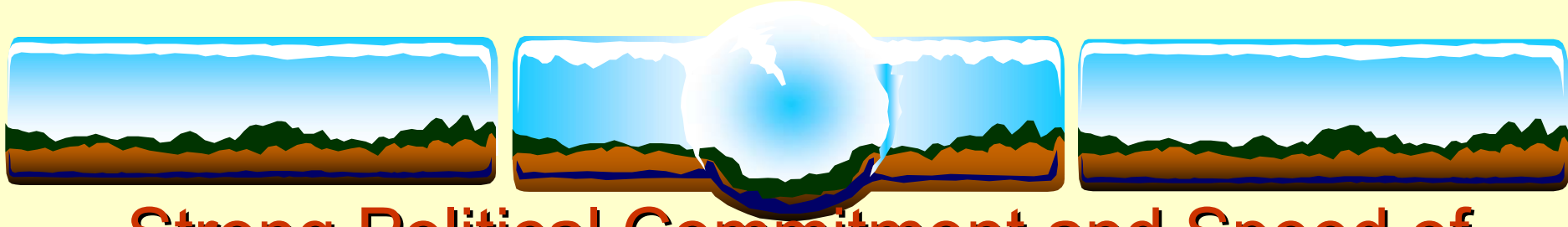
Strong Political Commitment and Speed of Action, Vietnam Key to Success

1. **High level of leadership and support from Govt & Speed of Action:**
 - ➔ **March 5: MoH notified by the French Hospital. Teams from NIHE and Hanoi Health Service sent for investigation;**
 - ➔ **Sunday March 9: MOH leader first meeting with WHO;**
 - ➔ **March 10: First meeting of the MoH Task Force and first official report of the outbreak sent to Deputy Prime Minister. Immediate surveillance and contact tracing carried out in Hanoi and Hung Yen;**
 - ➔ **March 12: Official Decision on Establishment of a Special Task Force at MoH and official request for WHO assistant sent;**



Strong Political Commitment and Speed of Action, Vietnam Key to Success (cont'd.)

- ➔ **March 14: Prime Minister informed of the outbreak; Official acknowledgment of SARS outbreak on National TV and other mass media and measures for prevention disseminated;**
- ➔ **March 19: Establishment of the SARS Inter-Governmental Steering Committee (IGSC) headed by Minister of Health, with members from Immigration, Civil Aviation, National Defense, Finance, Information, Tourism, etc. divided into four Sub-committees: **Surveillance and Containment; Clinical Management; IEC; Logistics,****
- ➔ **From March 19 to mid April: IGSC met every day at 5pm**



Strong Political Commitment and Speed of Action, Vietnam Key to Success (cont'd.)

- ➔ **Budget mobilization: Government provided more than 80 billion VND (5,3 mil. US\$) for purchasing of medicines, disinfectants, equipments and protective materials, etc.,**
- ➔ **Increasing 5 times the allowance for Health Care Worker involved in the SARS containment,**
- ➔ **Free of charge treatment for SARS patients,**
- ➔ **Ministry of Health is the headquarter of ISGC with leadership from the government and close cooperation with other ministries/ sectors.**



Vice Prime Minister at the first IGSC meeting on March 19, 2003



Minister of health at the meeting of IGSC



Minister of Health and Vice Chairman of Hanoi People's Committee are viewing the rehearsal of SARS mobile teams



Vice Minister of Health is checking the readiness of SARS mobile teams



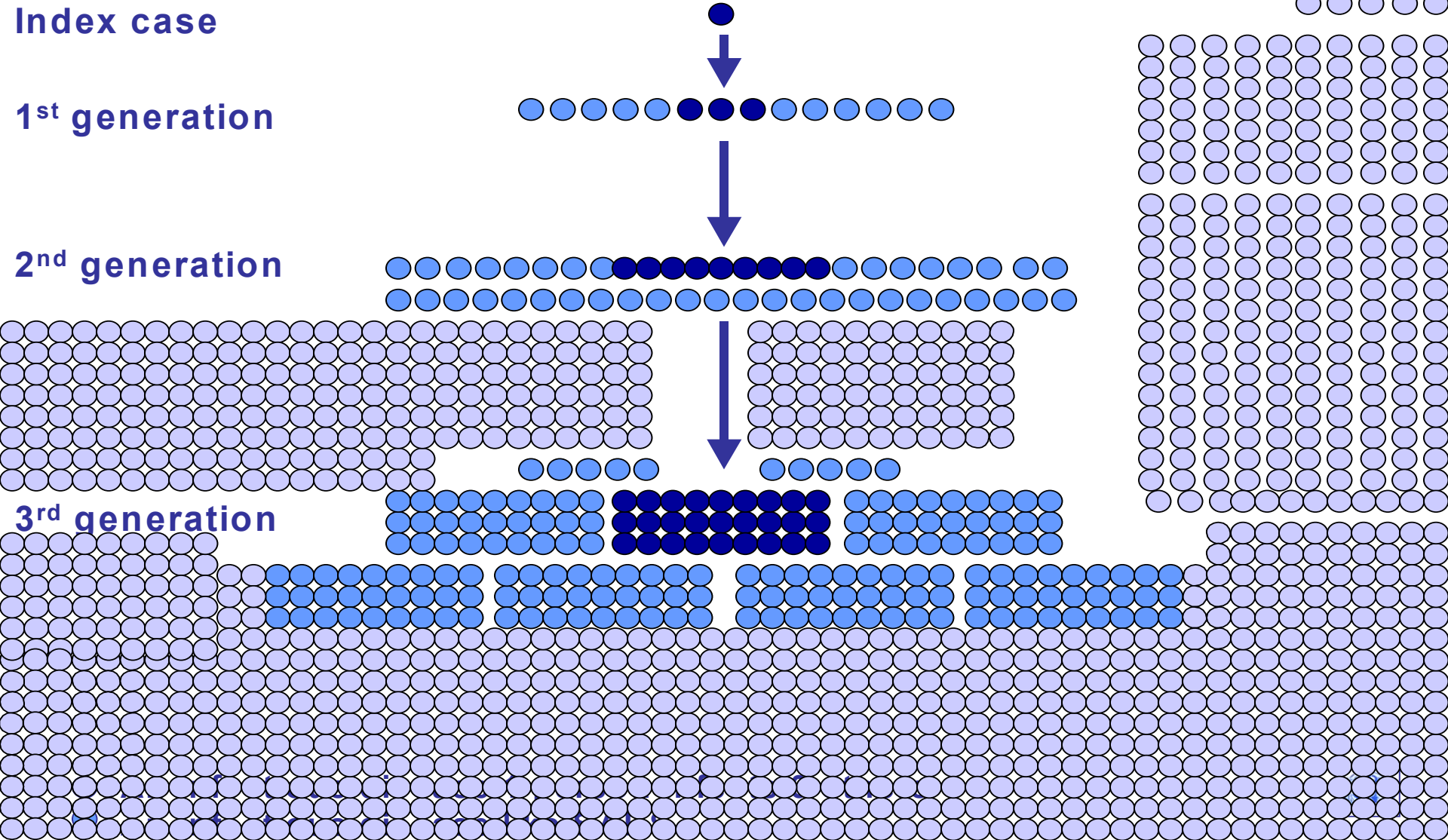
Team leader is reporting the preparation for SARS outbreak containment



Checking the readiness of SARS mobile teams



Why speed is important in SARS





Strong Political Commitment and Speed of Action, Vietnam Key to Success (cont'd.)

2. Appropriate technical measures to control SARS:

- ❖ Early detection of persons with SARS, their movements and contacts.
- ❖ Effective isolation of SARS patients in two hospitals as it is not possible to upgrade and maintain lots of areas with increased infection control
- ❖ Intensive and effective treatment of SARS cases
- ❖ Strengthen infection control skills
- ❖ Appropriate protection of medical staff treating SARS patients and their family

All these technical measures were properly implemented thanks to a good public health system



Strong Political Commitment and Speed of Action, Vietnam Key to Success (cont'd.)

3. **Effective work in partnership with WHO and other governments.**
 - ❖ **With high level support, internal and external resource mobilization was made possible,**
 - ❖ **For a new disease like SARS, external technical support is needed. Vietnam was ready to accept technical assistance (outbreak investigation skills, infection control skills from WHO, CDC. MSF, Australia, Japan,etc.)**
 - ❖ **Very good relations and trust between WHO and MoH**



Strong Political Commitment and Speed of Action, Vietnam Key to Success (cont'd.)

4. Early public acknowledgement of the outbreak, daily information to the public through mass-media and intensive IEC activities on prevention measures,
5. Well organized coordination,
6. Well ensure availability of specific protective supplies and equipment.



Recommendations

1. WHO should revise the IHR *ASAP* providing a common guidance of International Health Regulations/Quarantine for members states,
2. Promote scientific information exchange, strengthen disease outbreak alert and response at regional and global levels,
3. Establish a regional referral Lab for accurate and prompt diagnosis of newly emerged diseases.

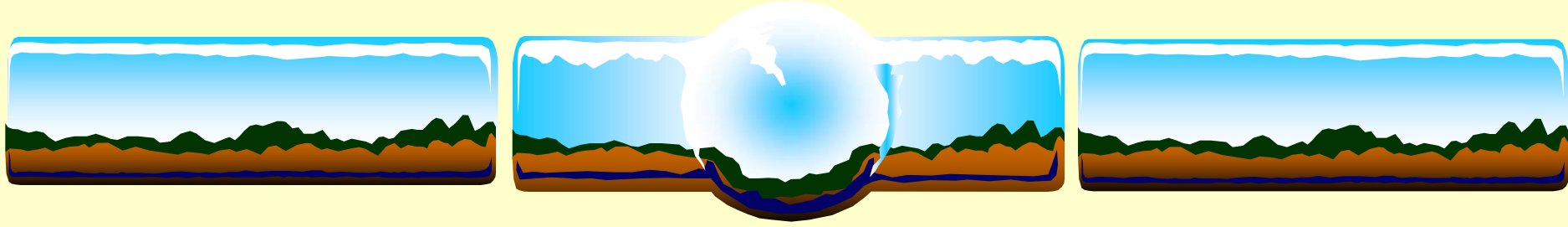


Conclusion

SARS is a political challenge: appropriate political measures are as important as technical ones

SARS is also a technical and ethical challenge: transparency needed vis μ vis the outside world, public and media

SARS can be contained but it needs strong political commitment, courage and appropriate technical measures



Thank you for your attention!