

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) WHO'S CONVEX 3 EXERCISE

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND IAEA MEMBER STATES TO TEST EMERGENCY PLANS

9-10 July 2008

1. What is CONVEX-3 Exercise?

This exercise is coordinated by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It is being carried out in co-operation with 74 IAEA Member States and nine international organizations in order to test national and international preparedness to respond to a nuclear or radiological emergency.

2. What is WHO's involvement in CONVEX 3?

Under the International Health Regulations (IHR) and as the lead health agency within the United Nations the WHO has a mandate to support the international response to all types of public health emergencies, including those associated with radio-nuclear events

As a full party to the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency (Emergency Notification and Assistance Conventions, 1987), WHO is a key participant in this exercise.

3. What is WHO's mandate in this exercise?

WHO's mandate is to fulfill its' responsibilities under the Emergency Notification and Assistance Conventions, as well as under the Joint Plan of International Organizations to be fully prepared to respond to any radiological or nuclear emergencies (2006 revision), and the International Health Regulations (IHR)

4. Who is taking part in this exercise?

As part of the Inter-Agency Committee for Response to Nuclear Accidents (IACRNA), this exercise was prepared by a working group including the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Nuclear Energy Agency of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (NEA/OECD), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Mexico and its neighboring countries.

5. Will ordinary citizens be affected in this exercise?

The exercise is only a simulation and there are no risks or hazards to the general public.

6. WHAT is REMPAN?

The Radiation Emergency Medical Preparedness and Assistance Network (REMPAN) was established in 1987 in order to fulfill WHO's responsibility under the two international conventions on *Early Notification and Assistance* (IAEA, 1987). The network is designated to provide emergency medical and public health assistance to people over-exposed to radiation.

It also facilitates a long-term care and follow-up of radiation accident victims and conducts research in radiation emergency medicine, bio-dosimetry and radiation epidemiology.

7. What are the International Health Regulations (IHR)?

The International Health Regulations (IHR) are an international legal instrument that is binding on the 193 Member States of WHO. Their aim is to help the international community prevent 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. Building on the unique experience of WHO in global disease surveillance, alert and response, 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.

8. What are the notification and other reporting requirements under the IHR?

A detailed account of the notification and other reporting requirements under the IHR can be found in IHR Brief No. 2 (http://www.who.int/csr/ihr/ihr_brief_no_2_en.pdf)

9. How do the IHR interact with other international agreements and bodies?

Under the IHR, States recognize that the Regulations and other relevant agreements should be compatible. The IHR (2005) provide for cooperation between WHO and other competent intergovernmental organizations or international bodies in the implementation of the Regulations. WHO will therefore continue to foster its longstanding working relationships with a number of organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Air Transport Association, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Maritime Organization, the World Tourism Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Office International d'Epizooties (World Organisation for Animal Health) and the World Trade Organization. In addition to these specialized organizations, WHO will work with regional economic integration organizations such as the European Union and the Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR) in implementing the Regulations in the countries of their respective regions.

10. Where can I find general information on the IHR?

All information relating on the IHR can be found on WHO's dedicated IHR website at www.who.int/ihr.
