

Conclusions from the Oslo Stakeholders' Meeting about Global Health Preparedness

Chairman's conclusions

On 12 December 2013 the Norwegian Institute of Public Health gathered representatives from the Norwegian Ministry of Health and Care Services, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the WHO Headquarter and the WHO Regional Office for Europe, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the Norwegian Armed Forces, the Norwegian Directorate of Health, the Norwegian Knowledge Center for Health Services, the University of Bergen, the University of Oslo, Médecins sans frontières (MSF) Norway and the Norwegian Health Network for Development to discuss global health preparedness and the role of the International Health Regulations (2005) in this regard.

As an outcome of the meeting, the Norwegian Institute of Public Health will take the lead in establishing a national and international network to develop bilateral and multilateral projects. The purpose of this network will be to strengthen health preparedness in low- and middle- income countries (LMICs) through the implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005).

Outbreaks and disasters respect no boundaries. The increased risk of spread of infectious diseases due to factors such as poverty, antimicrobial resistance and climate change, and the increased threat from non-infectious agents due to natural disasters and political instability exacerbate the impact on global health. We therefore recognize the importance of building strong health preparedness structures as an integrated part of health systems in LMICs.

The implementation of the IHR (2005) provides an additional impetus for ensuring that all countries have the capacity to detect, assess, report and respond to events of public health significance.

Understanding that the consequences, and the burden, of public health emergencies of national and international concern will always be more serious for the most vulnerable population groups, we have discussed equity as a pivotal issue in health financing, preparedness planning and health systems strengthening.

International collaboration is necessary to ensure global health security. In collaboration with the World Health Organization, we invite national and international partners to join in supporting the implementation of the IHR (2005) in LMICs as recommended in Article 44 of the Regulations through:

- assessing public health preparedness needs and capabilities in LMICs,
- developing plans for preparedness, response and training,

- strengthening surveillance systems for disease control,
- building capacity among the health workforce,
- improving laboratory capacity and quality,
- integrating the IHR in national legislation,
- ensuring adherence to the IHR alert and response functions when the situation so requires.

Risks to health are global and animals and humans are all dependent on safe food and healthy environments, for this reason, a 'One Health' and an 'All Hazards' approach in health preparedness is a means to simultaneously support LMICs and improve global health security. Better preparedness means strengthening our mutual ability to respond to emergencies of national and international concern in accordance with the IHR (2005) requirements. We are committed to collaborating with and assisting partners in LMICs across the globe to mitigate the devastating consequences of future outbreaks and disasters.