



Summary Report

Implementing the Health Aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction – Follow-up on the “Bangkok Principles”

Side Event at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Date and location: 15 July 2016, 1:15-2:30 pm, Conference Room 8, UN, New York

Organizers: The Royal Thai Government, UNISDR, and WHO

Objectives: Present the opportunities, benefits, and challenges to integrating health emergencies within an all-hazards approach to disaster risk reduction, including through the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the “Bangkok Principles”.

Panel Members:

- H.E. Mr. Virachai Plasai, Permanent Representative of Thailand to the UN;
- Dr. Phusit Prakongsai, Director, Bureau of International Health, Ministry of Public Health of Thailand;
- H.E. Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the UN;
- H.E. Mr. Amadu Koroma, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the UN;
- Mr. Jagan Chapagain, Chief of Staff and Director of Office of the Secretary General of International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC);
- Dr. Bruce Aylward, Executive Director a.i Outbreaks and Health Emergencies, World Health Organization - video message;
- Dr. David Nabarro, Secretary-General’s Special Advisor on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - video message;
- Mr. Neil McFarlane, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, Chief, New York Liaison Office (Moderator).

Discussion:

Building on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which strongly promotes health resilience, panelists explored the linkages between disaster risk reduction and health. Highlighting the significant loss of life and the serious economic and social impacts of health crisis and epidemics, panelists underscored the importance of prevention and preparedness and an effective global health architecture, augmented by strong national leadership and regional cooperation. To reduce risk of all types of hazards, the need to incorporate health crises into national disaster risk reduction strategies and to build capacities of health workers in understanding disaster risk and applying a risk-informed approach in their work was emphasized.

The seven recommendations known as the “Bangkok Principles” are the outcome of the International Conference on the Implementation of the Health Aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in March 2016, and call for an inter-operable, multi-sectoral approach to ensure systematic cooperation, integration and, ultimately, coherence between disaster and health risk management. Panelists highlighted the



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Principles as a coherent strategy that promotes a multi-hazard approach to implement the health components of the Sendai Framework. The importance of strong political commitment to implement the Bangkok Principles was underscored.

The Ebola epidemic and the Zika virus outbreak demonstrate the need for a multi-hazard, transboundary, and preventive approach to strengthen health and disaster resilience. In Sierra Leone, the project “Accelerating Implementation of the Sendai Framework in Ebola-Affected Countries with Risk-Informed Health Systems” is integrating disaster risk reduction into health systems. In Brazil, a comprehensive and coordinated approach, which focuses on surveillance and prevention, along with financial investment, information and awareness, and capacity building, has been critical in managing the threat posed by the Zika virus.

Panelists and participants stressed the centrality of community involvement to capitalize on local knowledge; establish trust and collaboration with authorities; and translate early warning into early action as communities can identify health risks before they become epidemics. Community level programmes such as the IFRC’s “One Billion Coalition for Resilience” and the “Community Based Health and First Aid” are empowering communities to identify local risks, including risks to public health, and to find local solutions. To support community based approaches, the Sendai Framework and the Bangkok Principles were recognized as important instruments to mobilize a whole of society approach and facilitate collaboration between all stakeholders in building resilient and healthy communities.

As disasters can have long term repercussions which undermine development prospects and trigger health crises, panelists underscored coherence between the Sendai Framework, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Every effort should be made to ensure development is resilient to disasters and that people’s health and wellbeing are protected and remain at the centre of development efforts. To this end, the panel highlighted the importance of coordinated implementation, knowledge sharing, and integrated monitoring and reporting on shared goals and indicators across the internationally agreed frameworks and agendas.

Conclusions:

- Strong political commitment and leadership, supported by transboundary cooperation and active community engagement, are essential to successfully implement the Bangkok Principles and the Sendai Framework, and to reduce the risks of health emergencies and the impact of disasters on health.
- To prevent and prepare for future health crises, a better understanding of health threats is needed, including investments in research, capacity building, and preparedness.
- There are a number of lessons and good practices in adopting a risk reduction approach to pandemics and building resilient health systems. Implementation of the Bangkok Principles could benefit from a systematic approach to sharing lessons and case studies.
- An integrated and mutually reinforcing approach to implementing the Sendai Framework, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement will build resilient health systems, which are a cornerstone of sustainable development.