

Regional Consultation on Strengthening of Emergency Medical teams (EMTs)

05-06 June 2018

New Delhi, India

Background

Sudden onset disasters occur without any advanced notice or warning and often cause extensive injuries to affected people and damage to the healthcare systems – making health facilities partially or completely damaged in crisis situations that may go beyond national capacities to respond.

The South-East Asia region is vulnerable to different types of disasters and emergencies. Countries in this region face a broad range of disasters from natural hazards including earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, landslides and volcanic eruptions that may require immediate assistance from national Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) within the affected country or by international EMTs. Examples in the South-East Asia Region are Gujarat, India earthquake (2001), Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004), Kashmir earthquake, India (2005), Yogyakarta earthquake, Indonesia (2006), Cyclone Nargis, Myanmar (2008), Nepal earthquake (2015), Chennai flood (2015) and Aceh earthquake, Indonesia (2016).

In an emergency, the outcome of response depends on how quickly the right expertise reaches at right place at the right time to meet the needs of affected people. Global and regional experiences have shown that following a sudden onset disaster, a large number of Emergency Medical Teams often arrive in the affected country to provide immediate emergency medical care and trauma management services for life-threatening conditions. Experience has shown that in many cases the deployment of these teams is not based on assessed needs and that there is wide variation in their capacities, competencies and adherence to professional ethics. Such teams are often unfamiliar with the international emergency response systems and standards, and may not integrate smoothly into the usual coordination mechanisms.

Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs)

An Emergency Medical Team is a group of health professionals (e.g., doctors, nurses, paramedics) providing direct clinical care to populations affected by disasters and health emergencies. This includes governmental (both civilian and military) and non-governmental teams and can include both national and international teams. The scope of EMTs range from management of trauma due to sudden onset disasters (mass casualty management) to acute medical emergency care especially in highly infectious outbreaks (e.g. Ebola).

The WHO EMT initiative aims to support Member States, NGOs and international organizations by identifying minimum standards, best practice, logistics and operational field coordination SOPs. The EMTs are an important part of the global health workforce and the EMT initiative places a strong focus on helping every country in developing its own EMT

that can arrive where they are needed in the shortest possible time. EMTs are expected to comply with globally agreed standards and coordination mechanism in humanitarian response.

WHO has developed a global verification and registry system where EMTs can be classified and ready to be deployed to health emergencies. The EMTs have been categorized in three types:

- **Type 1:** Mobile EMT: 50 patients/day, Fixed EMT: 100 patients/day
- **Type 2:** Inpatient surgical (with infrastructure; at least 7 major or 15 minor operations daily with at least 20 inpatient beds per one operating table)
- **Type 3:** Complex inpatient referral surgical care including intensive care capacity (At least 2 operating tables in 2 separate rooms within the theatre are, at least 40 inpatient beds and have the capacity to treat 15 major or 30 minor surgical cases a day).

WHO coordinates and supports this EMT initiative for predictable, self-sufficient and quality assured emergency medical response. WHO has been coordinating the development of standards, quality assurance and verification process for EMTs and guidance for EMT coordination. There are 13 EMTs which have been classified and verified through a peer-review process and more than 70 EMTs are currently going through assurance process.

WHO SEARO is organizing this important regional consultation on EMTs to map the existing capacities, to understand the strengths and challenges and to develop a roadmap for strengthening of EMTs in the Region. It is important to adopt standards, implement quality assurance and governance mechanisms for strengthening of national and international EMTs that may work in the South East Asia region.

Objectives

General objective

To strengthen national and regional EMTs in the South East Asia region for health emergency response and streamline EMT coordination mechanisms in the aftermath of an emergency

Specific objectives

1. To discuss and review global and regional developments in the area of EMT,
2. To map EMTs in the South East Asia region,
3. To develop EMT strengthening plan,
4. To adopt regional EMT governance mechanism and EMT coordination arrangements and
5. To draft discussion paper for the Regional Committee item on EMTs

This consultation is also a step towards preparation for the meeting of the Regional Committee of WHO/SEARO in September 2018 wherein strengthening of EMTs will be discussed as an agenda item.

Dates of the Consultation

05-06 June 2018

Venue

Le Meridien Hotel, New Delhi

Participants

More than 50 participants are expected to participate in the Regional Consultation:

- Representatives from Ministry of Health (involved in policy and operational aspects of EMTs) from 11 Member States of the SEA Region
- Non-governmental organizations and other agencies running EMTs in the SEA Region
- Operational partners and UN agencies involved in emergencies and EMTs
- EMT focal persons WHO Country Offices, Regional Offices and HQ

Expected Outcomes

- Comprehensive mapping of the EMTs in the South-East Asia region
- Draft plan for strengthening governance and coordination mechanisms for EMTs in the region
- Building of operational partnerships for an effective emergency response through coordinated network of EMTs
- Discussion paper on EMTs for the upcoming Regional Committee meeting in September 2018

Tentative Agenda

Day 1 (05 June 2018)

1. WHO's EMT Initiative, EMT standards and quality assurance process
2. Status and mapping of EMTs in SEAR countries
3. EMT coordination mechanism
4. EMT governance (Global and Regional)

Day 2 (06 June 2018)

5. National EMT capacity development in the South-East Asia Region
6. Plan to strengthen EMTs in the region
7. Regional Committee agenda item on EMT strengthening
8. Conclusion and way forward