

# RESOLUTION

OF THE  
WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR SOUTH-EAST ASIA

SEA/RC71/R5

## STRENGTHENING EMERGENCY MEDICAL TEAMS (EMTs) IN THE SOUTH-EAST ASIA REGION

The Regional Committee,

CONFIRMING that natural hazards, extreme climate, disease outbreaks, conflicts and natural & human-induced disasters cause serious disruptions to the functioning of a community, and widespread human, material, economic losses which exceed the ability of the affected community to cope with its own resources. The 2016 *World Disaster Report* has shown that over the past decade, the South-East Asia Region shared 26.8% of the global mortality due to disasters,

RECALLING that scaling up capacities in emergency risk management in the South-East Asia Region has been identified as a Flagship Programme by the Regional Director in 2016, and that strengthening partnerships, health systems resilience and readiness for effective emergency response are its important aspects,

RECOGNIZING that emergency medical teams (EMTs) contribute to life-saving critical interventions in emergency situations, with experience from the Region having shown that the deployment and surge of EMTs in emergencies were not based on assessed needs and there were wide variations in capacities, competencies and adherence to the WHO Classification and Minimum Standards,

ACKNOWLEDGING the need to adopt WHO minimum standards, implement quality assurance and governance mechanisms for strengthening national, regional and international EMT mechanisms in the South-East Asia Region,

ALSO ACKNOWLEDGING that strengthening national- and regional-level EMTs is a high-impact investment in reducing morbidity, mortality and disabilities due to disasters, outbreaks and other emergencies,

NOTING that a regional consultation organized by the WHO Health Emergencies Programme in the Regional Office for South-East Asia, in New Delhi during 5–6 June 2018, was attended by more than 60 participants from 11 countries of the Region, including representatives from the ministries of health and defence and civil society partners, confirming that the existing capacities in the Region have high potential for establishing and strengthening national and regional EMTs,

1. URGES Member States:

- (a) to establish or strengthen the national mechanisms which supports effective and high-performing national EMTs in line with the WHO Classification and Minimum Standards,
- (b) to develop and implement a national plan for strengthening systems for EMTs in collaboration with all key partners in accordance with country contexts, *inter alia*, to:
  - designate national EMT focal points and units which are responsible for multisectoral policy and operations coordination, quality assurance, deployment and capacity building;
  - establish a system for quality assurance for EMTs to train and sustain a critical mass of national EMT capacities, and conduct post-operation assessment for learning and continued improvement;
  - maintain a national database on EMTs;
  - encourage EMTs to engage in the WHO mentorship and classification process which strengthen the global EMTs,
- (c) to harmonize, synergize and optimize the partner agencies' contributions, in terms of expertise, equipment, human and material resources, in strengthening the national EMTs,

2. ESTABLISHES a Regional EMT Working Group, comprising representatives of Member States which may invite relevant partners and stakeholders to participate in its work, as appropriate, to support implementation of the EMT Initiative, and

3. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

- (a) to provide support to the establishment and management of the Regional EMT Working Group,

- (b) to provide technical assistance and support for training, quality assurance, coordination and other activities for strengthening EMTs in Member States of the SEA Region,
- (c) to identify, promote and facilitate areas of research and innovation to strengthen EMTs, and
- (d) to report progress, achievements, challenges and solutions in implementing this resolution to the Seventy-third and Seventy-fifth Sessions of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia.

Eighth session, 7 September 2018