

INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION CAMPAIGN REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM 2009.

RESOLUTIONS OF REGIONAL (SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA) SYMPOSIUM

THEME OF SYMPOSIUM: HOSPITALS SAFE FROM DISASTER: *Reduce Risk, Protect Health Facilities, Save Lives*

In the ISDR World Disaster Reduction Awareness Symposium on Safe Hospitals held on 14 – 15 October 2009 in Lejweleputswa District Municipality, Welkom, Free State, South Africa, over 350 participants representing the UNISDR, WHO, government's from seven African countries, namely, South Africa, Seychelles, Mauritius, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Tanzania, under the auspices of the South African Government, meeting with the common objective of identifying measures for making hospitals and other health facilities safe from disasters and after noting the United Nations Secretary General, Honourable (Mr) Ban Ki-moon and Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Honourable (Mr), Sicelo Shiceka's International Day for Disaster Reduction Messages, remained firmly convinced that:

Health facilities, whether hospitals or rural health clinics, should be a source of strength during emergencies and disasters. They should be readily available, adequately resourced and capacitated to save lives and continue to provide essential health services. They should also be the symbol of hope during these critical times and contribute to the community's sense of security and well being.

The symposium was therefore conducted under the conviction that more needs to be done to address the question of hospitals safety given the fact that *the price we pay for the failure of health care facilities when disasters happen is too high in comparison to the cost of making these facilities safe and resilient from disasters* (adapted from World Health Organisation & Western Pacifica Region, s.a). The under-mentioned resolutions were adopted with due consideration of the resolutions of the 2nd Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction held from 16-19 June 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland which ended with a call to halve disaster related deaths by 2015, in particular, specific targets relating to hospital safety from disasters, notably:

- The need for structural evaluation of all hospitals and firm action plans safer hospitals developed and implemented in all disaster prone countries by 2015, and;

- All major cities and disaster prone areas to include and enforce DRR measures in their building and land use codes.

The delegation therefore resolved that with commitment, capacity and resources, it is possible to realise the objectives of hospitals safety from disasters as listed hereunder:

- the protection of lives of patients and health workers by ensuring the structural resilience of health facilities;
- making sure that health facilities and health services are able to function in the aftermath of emergencies and disasters, when they are most needed, and;
- improving the emergency management capacity of health workers and institutions, including emergency preparedness.

Therefore, the symposium concluded that hospital safety from disasters is a central service delivery and sustainable development measure critical to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, regional and national developmental goals and service delivery priorities.

The symposium therefore resolved that the following measures will be propagated for adaptation and implementation in the region and within national systems in order to realise the developmental disaster risk reduction measures underscoring the campaign straddling both structural and non-structural measures:

- a). Ensure risk and vulnerability assessments of all health facilities;
- b). Ensure risk reduction and resilience towards the impact of disasters in the design and construction of all new health facilities, including compliance with applicable national and local building codes;
- c). Improving the non-structural and functional resilience of existing health facilities;
- d). Adopting legislative and financial measures to identify and retrofit the most critical facilities to increase levels of protection;
- e). Need for adequate institutional capacities and resources;
- f). Mobilise human and material resources;
- g). Ensure availability of safe water supplies;
- h). Maintenance of all hospitals and health care facilities;
- i). Ensure functional communication and early warning systems in all health facilities;



- j). Ensure an effective transportation network and availability of various modes of transport;
- k). Ensure availability and resilience of infrastructure including access to evacuation routes as well as emergency facilities (e.g. tents, health care, etc);
- l). Appointment of a suitable Disaster Risk Manager for each and every health care facility to oversee disaster risk reduction and mitigation in all health facilities;
- m). Empowerment of the holistic health care team down to community level to build a culture of safety;
- n). On-going training and accreditation system;
- o). Monitoring and evaluation as well as post-emergency / disaster reflection and lessons learned;
- p). Upward, downward and lateral communication of the disaster plan;
- q). Carry out regular simulation exercises on disaster preparedness;
- r). Responsibility and accountability;
- s). Clarification of legal framework and;
- t). Adequate resourcing to realise the objectives of hospitals safety from disasters.

Therefore, the key sectors to this campaign will convene an urgent national strategic planning session to draw up an effective, efficient and sustainable project plan to guide the process further.

Furthermore, in order to build **national capacities and sustain implementation momentum** on ISDR campaign themes, the following measures were adopted:

- To convene national pre-campaign workshops and to conduct training programmes to build capacity for the implementation of campaign objectives;
- To make campaign themes standing items within national, provincial and local forums in order to build and sustain the implementation momentum nationally.

Support and monitoring of the implementation of the above-mentioned measures will be undertaken by the UNISDR (at regional level) and by the National Platforms (at national level) and all reports to UNISDR will be submitted periodically via the national platforms as part of reporting on progress with the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 – 2015: *Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters*.



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