

Work sheet on the International Health Regulations revision proposals.

II Defining core capacities in surveillance and response under the revised IHR

Background

A pre-requisite to effective international surveillance and response is that countries have functioning national and sub-national systems of surveillance and response. National capacity building is a key component of WHO's global health security strategy and crucial to the implementation of the revised IHR obligations to notify and verify *public health emergencies of international concern*. It is therefore proposed to include in the revised IHR a statement of the minimal functional capacity in surveillance and response required by any Member State to allow them to effectively implement the IHR provisions. WHO recognises that for many countries of the world these minimum capacities cannot be met immediately, however we believe that it is very useful to have a statement of the minimum capacity as an internationally agreed target which will encourage national governments and donors to invest in this area to ensure compliance with the revised IHR.

A WHO draft of the core capacities in surveillance and response has been given to you. This represents relatively high level capacity expressed in general terms. For instance it does not indicate which type of laboratory test should be available at which level of the health service. Such detailed information could go out of date quickly as technology and disease patterns change. This type of detail will be found in other WHO documents from programmes directly carrying out capacity building.

Objectives

The aim of the session is to get critical feedback on the WHO draft document of core capacity requirements for surveillance and response from both an expert and national perspective. The document is intended to clearly indicate those outputs of a national disease surveillance and response system that relate to the IHR (there are many other important functions of such systems not addressed in this document). The document should be helpful in identifying areas of weakness in existing systems. The objectives of this session are :

1. to understand the concept of "core capacities in surveillance and response"
2. to evaluate the current draft proposal in terms of clarity and usefulness
3. to compare the functionality of the surveillance and response system in your own country with the core capacities described

Process

There will be resource persons to assist you with any questions around the process or particulars of the exercise. Appoint a chairman and rapporteur for each group. Each

individual is asked to carefully read the document provided and then to answer the questions in their individual capacity. The answers will then be discussed in the group and the rapporteur is requested to record the group discussion and key points raised.

1. Does the paper explain the concepts around core capacity sufficiently to be understood? What parts are not clear and how would you improve them?
2. Can the current draft be applied in your national context? Which areas of your early warning surveillance and response system correspond with the expectations outlined in this document?
3. On reading this document can you identify any areas of your own early warning surveillance and response system that would need strengthening in order to adopt the IHR? If so, what are they?
4. Are there any additional important elements for early warning surveillance and response systems that have been omitted from the document? If so, please state them.
5. What could be the usefulness, if any, of having WHO's Member States adopt the establishment of such minimum capacities?