

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
WEEKLY MEETING GENEVA

Summary Notes

15 February
Geneva

I Communicable Diseases in Emergencies Field Manual

By **Dr. Michelle Gayer** (WHO), *Medical Officer, Disease Control in Humanitarian Emergencies, Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases.*

Dr. Gayer presented the recently published field manual on “Communicable Disease Control in Emergencies”.

Communicable diseases are a major cause of morbidity and mortality in emergencies. Populations affected by conflict or natural disasters are at higher risk of these diseases due to a number of factors including displacement, relocation in temporary settlements, collapsed health services, and water and food shortages.

The Communicable Diseases in Emergencies field manual provides practical guidance to public health professionals working in emergencies on the prevention and control of communicable diseases in these settings. It provides a systematic approach to the planning, implementation and monitoring of disease control activities, which are key components of effective humanitarian response. The manual has been 4 years in the making and is the result of collaboration among a number of WHO departments and several external partner agencies in reviewing existing guidelines on communicable disease control and adapting them to emergency situations. The hope is that the manual will provide a useful tool to ensure evidence-based interventions are implemented to control disease and protect the health of emergency-affected populations.

The manual can be ordered from the WHO bookshop online:
<http://www.who.int/bookorders/index.htm>

In the discussion following the briefing, Dr. Gayer emphasised that the field manual is in full accordance with and incorporates the Sphere standards, adding a more practical and detailed dimension to them.

II IASC Policy on Humanitarian Action and Avian Human Influenza (AHI)

By **Ms. Norah Niland** (OCHA), *Chief, Policy Development Section*

Ms. Niland introduced the upcoming Consultation on Avian and Human Influenza (AHI) and Humanitarian Action to be held on 22-24 February in Geneva.

The IASC Working Group decided in November 2005 on the need for a coordinated IASC approach to address the threat of a pandemic. Following an informal one-day brainstorming on 16th December 2005 in Geneva and a Technical Consultation in Boston (12-13 January) the

meeting on 22-24 February is aimed at bringing representatives from all IASC Agencies together with the overall objective to review and identify issues of strategic significance to humanitarian action within the context of an AHI pandemic and formulation of proposal(s) in this regard for consideration by the upcoming IASC Working Group in March 2006.

The discussion following the briefing focused among others on the need for a coherent approach among humanitarian agencies. UNICEF reiterated that together with FAO and WHO they are developing a common communications strategy. It was stressed that in responding to the avian flu and a possible human influenza pandemic, the main responsibility and capacity lies with governments and communities.

III Central American Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Response and Response Preparedness, Guatemala City, 28 February to 2 March 2006 - Information

By Mr. Fabrizio Gentiloni (OCHA), Assistant Director, Coordination and Response Division, Office of the Deputy Director

Mr. Gentiloni informed about the meeting in Guatemala City, which is being organized by OCHA, the Government of Guatemala and the Central American Integration System (SIGA).

The objective of the meeting will be to promote the improvement and strengthening of disaster response capacity and response preparedness in Central America. The specific objectives of the meeting are threefold: a) Analyse and draw lessons from the response to the 2005 tropical hurricane season, highlighting achievements, b) recommend concrete measures to overcome current difficulties and incorporate them in a high-level declaration to be made at the end of the meeting, and c) recommend response preparedness measures for the 2006 tropical hurricane season.

The expected outcomes of the meeting are: a) A strong political message emphasizing the need to continue improving and strengthening disaster response and response preparedness at local, national and regional level. This will be achieved by means of a press conference and if possible, a high-level resolution in writing; b) a framework for collaboration between SICA/CEPREDENAC¹ and OCHA in the field of disaster response and response preparedness.

Participants include Governments from the region, heads of the national entities in charge of disaster management, the UN Resident Coordinators / Humanitarian Coordinators in the region, the representatives of UN regional offices and of the regional office of IFRC, national Red Cross societies, bi- and multilateral donors, national associations of municipalities, international and national NGOs involved in humanitarian work, and the private sector. The ERC and officials from participating countries are to take part in the High-Level Meeting on 2 March.

Furthermore, Mr. Gentiloni, informed participants on recent developments in Bolivia, where severe floods following heavy rainfalls have affected the country. An UNDAC mission is being deployed to the area. OCHA situation reports on the situation in Bolivia will be posted on ReliefWeb.

¹ Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America

Participants

No.	Name	Organisation	Email
1	Mr. Paul Paredes-Portella	FAO	pparedes-portella@unog.ch
2	Mr. Kersten Jauer	IASC Secretariat	jauer@un.org
3	Mr. Jacob Korreborg	IASC Secretariat	korreborg@un.org
4	Ms. Yukiko Yoshida	IASC Secretariat	yoshiday@un.org
5	Ms. Amanda Bok	ICRC	abok.gva@icrc.org
6	Ms. Heba Morayef	ICRC	hmorayef@icrc.org
7	Mr. Sajith Gunaratne	IOM	sgunaratne@iom.int
8	Mr. Fabrizio Gentiloni	OCHA	gentiloni@un.org
9	Ms. Megan Gilgan	OCHA	gilgan@un.org
10	Ms. Katja Laurila	OCHA	laurilak@un.org
11	Mr. Ricardo Mena	OCHA	menar@un.org
12	Ms. Claire Messina	OCHA	messinac@un.org
13	Ms. Myrtia Murgia	OCHA	murgia@un.org
14	Ms. Norah Niland	OCHA	niland@un.org
15	Ms. Delphine Pastorel	OCHA	postorel@un.org
16	Ms. Denise Jackson	UNICEF	djackson@unicef.org
17	Ms. Esther Vigneau	UNICEF	evigneau@unicef.org
18	Mr. Francesco Pisano	UNITAR	francesco.pisano@unitar.org
19	Dr. Michelle Gayer	WHO	gayerm@who.int
20	Dr. Pamela Sabina Mbabazi	WHO	mbabazi@who.int
21	Ms. Suzanne O'Rourke	WHO	orourke@who.int
22	Ms. Tanja Sleuwenhoek	WHO	sleuwenhoek@who.int