Strategic planning meeting of WHO collaborating centres for prevention of deafness
23-24 April, 2013, Beijing, PR China

Background:
The WHO programme for prevention of deafness and hearing loss (PDH) has been re-initiated since December 2011. The WHO PDH is supported in its workplan by the seven WHO collaborating centres (CC) in the field of prevention of deafness and hearing loss. As part of this new programme and in line with the WHO’s policy on collaborating centres, a need was identified for the collaborating centres to develop greater collaboration with WHO and each other and form the WHO network of collaborating centres for prevention of deafness and hearing loss.

WHO has identified the following characteristics of a successful network of WHO collaborating centres:

• **strong leadership from WHO** to organize the network;

• preparation of **an agreed strategic plan** that lays out the role and work expected of each of the CCs and fosters joint projects and collaboration between the CCs;

• **a strong coordinator** from WHO and/or one or the network CCs to sustain the network and keep it active;

• **an effective and efficient system of communication**, including regular meetings (annual or every two years) where all the CCs come together to review/update the strategic plan, build solidarity, discuss activities, and renew their commitments to continue to work together following the common strategies;

• **sufficient period of collaboration** to develop close working relationships (e.g. occupational health for about 15 years, nursing for more than 30 years, and influenza for more than 10 years); and

• **availability of funds** (even in limited amounts) to support the network when required, provided by WHO or network members.
Objectives of the meeting:

- To sensitize the WHO CCs to the current WHO programme for prevention of deafness.
- To understand the perspective of the WHO CCs with regard to prevention of deafness at the local, regional and global level.
- To develop a strategic plan of work for the collaborating centre.
- To outline administrative procedures regarding reporting and re-designation.
- To explore possibilities for fundraising for activities and future meetings.

Expected outcomes:

- WHO CCs sensitized to the WHO rules, regulations and programme of work.
- Coordinator for the network of WHO CCs identified, with clear roles and responsibilities.
- Strategic plan of work developed with the roles of all centres and WHO defined.
- An effective system of communication agreed.
- Possible funding options explored.

Participants (Refer Annex 1):
Five collaborating centres participated in the meeting. Another centre, which is currently under designation, also participated. This was considered appropriate so that the workplan of the centre under designation could be aligned to the workplan of the network and the centre could understand WHO’s policies regarding the WHO CCs.

Proceedings:
The opening of the meeting coincided with the opening ceremony of the China Audiology forum. The opening ceremony was addressed by:

1. Mr Yanhong Guo of the National Health and Family Planning Commission of PR China (NHFPC).
3. Dr Shelly Chadha, Technical Officer, Prevention of Deafness and Hearing loss, WHO.

A detailed presentation on the current status of hearing loss in PR China was presented, along with information about the plans and ongoing activities in PR China for prevention, identification and management of hearing loss.

Session I: Background presentations:

1. WHO programme for prevention of deafness and hearing loss (WHO PDH):
Dr Shelly Chadha, WHO. The current programme of work of WHO PDH aims to revive and strengthen principles and practice of primary ear and hearing health as an integral part of the health system, and in a holistic and community-oriented mode. The detailed objectives and activities of the current workplan as well as achievements, till date, were outlined. The main areas of focus for the future work were identified as:

- Advocacy
- Guidance and support to Member States
- Data and Research
- Strong partnerships

2. Presentation of current activities being undertaken by the WHO collaborating centres:
   a) China Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Deafness, Beijing:
      Mr Xiangyang Hu. CRRCDC has been implementing the national projects for the hearing-impaired children in poverty to access hearing aids, cochlear implants and rehabilitation services. Via the implementation of projects and administering the institutions, the network of 1044 rehabilitation institutes has been established by 2012. From 2009 to 2012, CRRCDC has offered training to 2639 professionals, including 241 HA Acousticians and 92 AVT teachers. The service system of hearing-impaired children has been promoted. To improve service capacity, CRRCDC carried out the model of rehabilitation reform to develop the full potentials of hearing-impaired children and promoted a series of tutorial books. A
community-based pilot project integrating hearing screening into primary community level system in rural areas was implemented. We developed tutorial materials in Tibetan and Uygur language and standards of hearing and speech rehabilitation national standards of hearing and speech rehabilitation. Thirty three research projects have been undertaken.

b) **Dr Cipto Mangunkusumo National Hospital, Medical Faculty University of Indonesia: Dr Ronny Suwento.** The main activities of the Jakarta Centre are Public services, education/training and research. Planned activities include: training/workshop on ear and hearing health in CBR, Newborn Hearing Screening training for PHC team; multidiscipline training workshop on ear and hearing health in CBR and professional training/course on ear and HI rehabilitation. The Jakarta Centre will also participate in collaborative research on hearing impairment and CBR under WHO leadership. Other proposed activities relate to Primary Ear Care Services, development of strategies for CBR regarding HI activities from prevention and promotion through care and rehabilitation and implementation of WHO programme at country and regional level.

c) **Beijing Institute of Otorhinolaryngology, Beijing Tongren Hospital, PR China: Dr Demin Han.** The main objectives of the work being undertaken by the centre include establishing a database of hearing disorders in PR China and training workshops for professional development in the field of ear and hearing care. It includes translation of WHO official manuals and publications into Chinese and holding national and international training workshops supervised by WHO. Raising awareness in the general public regarding the problems of the hearing-impaired and deaf communities (especially those living in remote areas) by media is a focus area. The centre plans to host meetings, seminars and conferences on the prevention of deafness in the Asia-Pacific Region or other parts of the world to share experiences with other groups working in this field. It
also aims to work towards establishment of the national framework of deafness prevention in PR China.

d) **Hearing Impairment Research Group, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, University of Liverpool, UK: Dr Ian MacKenzie.** Current activities relate to research work on otitis media, its causes, effects and management in developing countries. The centre coordinates research on epidemiology of hearing loss, its causes and cost-effective management in developing countries.

e) **Jiangsu Ear and Hearing Centre, Nanjing Medical University:**

Dr Xingkuan Bu. During the past four years, the centre has participated in the global assessment of hearing loss, conducted the resource investigation on prevention and treatment of hearing impairment in PR China, joined in the drafting of the National Newborn Hearing Screening plan, organized the national training courses on the NHS in many places. In addition, it has drafted a book of primary ear and hearing care, and initiated the gene-screening programme in clinical patients with hearing loss. To raise public awareness of hearing impairment, large public consulting, press conferences, and multiple media announcement were held on the China’s Ear Care Day each year. In 2011, a hearing aid training base was set up in Nanjing centre. More than 400 hearing aid dispensers received the training and qualified by the government. In the next four years, the focus will be on the following aspects: (1) to contribute to WHO’s work in the development of the PEHC in PR China; (2) to work with WHO guidelines for hearing aid and services for developing countries; and (3) to work with WHO guiding principles for action on newborn and infant hearing screening continuously.

f) **Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Research Centre, Iran University of Medical Sciences, Dr A.H. Choudhury,** Medical Officer, PBD, WHO EMRO. During the past two years our centre has participated in the global assessment of hearing loss
in adults, preschool and neonatal screening programmes in Iran and translation of WHO training manuals into Persian. To raise public awareness of hearing impairment we performed these activities: 1) publishing training pamphlets, 2) arranging Radio /TV programmes, 3) publishing articles in public magazines, newspapers and 4) holding training workshops for different levels.

In the following next two years, the focus will be on the following aspects:
1) Holding more international and national training workshops and meetings,
2) continuing of our previous works for rising public awareness and rehabilitation programmes, 3) strengthening our national and international network with supervision of WHO, 4) Preparing a national strategic plan for prevention of deafness and hearing loss with the support of ministry of health.

g) London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London UK: Dr Andrew Smith. The proposed WHO Collaborating Centre for Eye and Ear Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine will be headed by Professor Allen Foster, and located in the International Centre for Eye Health. It will also have linkages with the International Centre for Evidence in Disability at the School. There are four Terms of Reference (TOR) for actions in the Ear Health section. The first two include updating the WHO Ear and Hearing Disorders Survey Protocol and analysis software, and providing technical support to Member States in order to conduct population-based surveys using the WHO Protocol. The third activity pertains to conduct of courses on Public Health Planning for Hearing Impairment in key centres mainly in low- and middle-income (LMI) countries. The fourth proposed area of work is a research study to assess impact of hearing loss and hearing aids on poverty, household economy, health-related quality of life, education and employment in children and adults in LMI countries.
Session II: WHO policy regarding collaborating centres: designation, workplans, reporting, re-designation: Dr Shelly Chadha, WHO.

The presentation highlighted strategic rationale and functional scope of collaborating centres. Various administrative and procedural issues in relation to the designation, re-designation, reporting, workplan development, publications, use of WHO name and logo were dealt with.

Session III: Development of a strategic plan for WHO CCs to support the WHO programme for prevention of deafness and hearing loss.

An initial presentation outlining the importance and mechanism of developing from individual CCs affiliated to WHO into a network of CCs promoting prevention of deafness and hearing loss at a global level under leadership of WHO. A 4-step process was outlined:

Step 1: Creating a master list of activities,
Step 2: Mapping the designated WHO CCs,
Step 3: Creating a network matrix,
Step 4: Establishing twinning arrangements.

The outcome was to be the development of a logframe of activities, with identified responsibilities of all CCs involved.

Four key areas of collaborative work were identified:

- effective advocacy;
- guidance and support to Member States;
- data and research;
- strong partnerships.

Group work: The participants were divided into two groups, each group was tasked with discussion of two of the above-mentioned objectives. The purpose of the group work was:

- To identify and list possible activities under each objective, for a two-year work period.
- To identify which CC was best situated to lead on each of the activities.
- To list other possible contributors to the identified activity.
The outcome of the group work was presented by the members of the group and discussed. The outcomes and recommendations are as below:

**Recommendations:**

- The WHO collaborating centres should be realigned to develop a WHO network of collaborating centres for prevention of deafness and hearing loss.
- Details of all the CC network would be hosted on the WHO website, with links to the websites of the collaborating centres.
- All CCs (which have a website) to add links to WHO PDH webpage on their site.
- A two-year workplan should be developed.
- Activities identified under the four key areas of work should be the focus of the plan.
- Each activity would be led by one collaborating centre with one or more CCs contributing to it.
- Funding for each of the proposed activities would be provided by the CCs themselves, through their individual budgets/sources.
- The network should meet every two years to review the activities and develop a fresh plan of work.
- If possible and considered appropriate at the time, future meetings could be held alongside other international meetings and conferences.

**Next steps:**

- Logframe of activities would be circulated by Shelly Chadha by 31 May 2013.
- Finalization of logframe of activities with outcome indicators, by 30 June 2013.
- Newsletter on WHO PDH and CCs: October 2013, October 2014.
- Mid-term review of status of implementation of activity plan: May 2014.
### Annex 1

**Strategic Planning Meeting of WHO collaborating centres for prevention of deafness, Beijing, PR China**

23-24 April, 2013

**List of centres and participants**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of centre</th>
<th>Director</th>
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<th>Persons attending Strategic planning meeting</th>
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