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1 The six WHO regional offices: AFRO – Regional Office for Africa; EMRO - Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean; EURO - Regional Office for Europe; PAHO/AMRO – Pan American Sanitary Bureau/Regional Office for the Americas; SEARO - Regional Office for South-East Asia; WPRO - Regional Office for the Western Pacific.
WHAT’S NEW IN IHR COORDINATION AND SUPPORT

- **WHO Secretariat’s report to the 62nd World Health Assembly**
  The IHR Department has updated the report submitted to the WHO Executive Board ([www.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB124/B124_5-en.pdf](www.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB124/B124_5-en.pdf)) for submission to the next World Health Assembly. This report will soon be posted on the WHO web site in the six official languages of the Organization.
  To facilitate States’ reporting to the Assembly a questionnaire was sent out early in the year. The responses are still being received and will be compiled into a summary report and shared with National IHR Focal Points once completed.

- **WHO Risk Communication Working Group meeting, 4–5 March 2009, Lyon, France**
  The WHO IHR Risk Communication Working Group gathered risk communication experts and practitioners from national health authorities, regional organizations, UN Agencies and WHO to explore existing and required risk communication capacity building strategies. Building from the designation of risk communication as one of the eight National Level Core Capacities for Surveillance and Response the specific objectives of the meeting were to:
  - share details of ongoing or planned risk communication capacity building strategies
  - consider the definition of risk communication for public health emergencies
  - recommend core capacities and key indicators for risk communication under the IHR.
  A meeting report detailing the recommendations of the Working Group will be released shortly.
  For more information please contact John Rainford, Project Manager, Risk Communication at +33(0)4 72 71 64 80 or rainfordj@who.int

- **Informal consultation on the development of an International Training Programme “International Health Regulations Implementation Course”, 11–13 March 2009, Lyon, France**
  Following a first meeting held in Geneva in December 2008, this meeting gathered 19 participants from the University of Pretoria South Africa, Georgetown University Law Centre USA, the Universities of Lausanne and Geneva Switzerland, and WHO Headquarters, to work on the design of a training programme to strengthen/develop the critical human resources engaged in the implementation of IHR. This meeting made it possible to specify learning objectives and related topics for the whole course. The first session of the course is planned for February 2010, targeting professionals from all Member States. For more information please contact ihrinfo@who.int

- **IHR implementation in national legislation: three legal toolkits**
  IHR Coordination Geneva has released three documents to assist countries to integrate the IHR requirements into their existing national legislation:
  - A brief introduction to IHR (2005) implementation in national legislation
  - Toolkit for IHR (2005) implementation in national legislation: The National IHR Focal Point
  These documents are available online at [www.who.int/csr/ihr/legislation/en/index.html](www.who.int/csr/ihr/legislation/en/index.html)
  They will soon be available in the six official WHO languages.

- **International Travel and Health**
  The 2009 edition of the WHO publication *International Travel and Health* (ITH) is now available online on the new ITH web site at: [www.who.int/ith](www.who.int/ith) The new site now also features:
  - an interactive map for yellow fever and malaria country requirements and information;
  - updated and improved disease distribution maps;
  - updates for travellers;
• useful country web links on travel and health;
• a poster to advertise the ITH 2009 edition; and
• a poster for health clinics.
The French version of ITH 2009 will be available shortly.

“Surveillance under the International Health Regulations (2005)”
This article (currently available in German only) lays out the main obligations for States Parties and for WHO in the revised Regulations and explores future challenges for the global community to contain or reduce the risk from public health threats that may spread between countries. Published in PubMed, US National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health, 12 February 2009. Available at: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19271253?ordinalpos=1&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed_ResultsPanel.Pubmed_DefaultReportPanel.Pubmed_RVDocSum

WHAT’S NEW IN RISK AND DISEASE CONTROL

• Polio eradication and control
In response to a polio outbreak originating in Nigeria, an eight-country synchronized vaccination campaign in West Africa was launched on 27 February 2009. Nigeria and seven of its neighbours immunized more than 53 million children over four days and again in late March. More than 162 000 vaccinators implemented the campaign in the affected countries www.polioeradication.org/content/general/LatestNews200902.asp#WESTAFRICA

• Short Field Epidemiology Course, 23 March – 8 April 2009, Mauritius
This course was developed within the framework of the Indian Ocean Surveillance and Outbreak Investigation Network (RSIE-COI), launched at the close of 2008. It was organized jointly by the Indian Ocean Commission and WHO (WHO Lyon Office and AFRO), and hosted by the Mauritius Institute of Health. Thirty one professionals from Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, la Réunion (France) and Seychelles, working in the areas of disease control and epidemiological surveillance and response (human and animal health), are attending the course to improve their competencies in the areas of surveillance and investigation. This course constitutes the first major activity of the RSIE-COI and, as such, will make an important contribution to the development of the Network.

• WHO Outbreak Communication Planning Guide
The WHO Outbreak Communication Planning Guide, 2008 edition, has now been released. The Guide, developed in collaboration with more than 120 experts and practitioners, provides detailed capacity building recommendations for national public health authorities. To receive an electronic copy, please contact Ms Tiffany Domingo at domingoc@who.int

• Guidance on Regulations for the Transport of Infectious Substances — 2009–2010
These guidelines provide practical guidance to facilitate compliance with current international regulations for the transport of infectious substances and patient specimens by all modes of transport, both nationally and internationally, and include the changes that apply from 1 January 2009. They replace the guidelines issued by WHO in 2007 (document WHO/CDS/EPR/2007.2). Guidance on regulations for the transport of infectious substances – 2009–2010 is available in English and Spanish at: www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/biosafety/WHO_HSE_EPR_2008_10/en/index.html
This document will also be released in French shortly.
• **Communicable Disease Alert and Response for Mass Gatherings, Report of the technical workshop, 29–30 April 2008, Geneva, Switzerland**

This report provides a summary of the discussions and agreements reached during the workshop on mass gatherings held on 29–30 April 2008. The document is designed to help countries hosting mass gatherings to assess the level and nature of the public health risks and the capacity of existing systems and services in order to anticipate public health needs for the duration of the occasion. The main focus of the document is alert and response to outbreaks of communicable diseases, however, the principles and practices described may prove valuable in planning other aspects of mass gatherings. It may be downloaded at: [www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/WHO_HSE_EPR_2008_8/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/WHO_HSE_EPR_2008_8/en/index.html)


This report summarizes the discussions and conclusions that came out of the meeting on infection prevention and control (IPC) programmes. It identifies the core components that must be considered in the development of IPC programmes, such as prevention of health-care-associated infections in patients, in health-care workers and visitors; preparation of health-care systems for the early detection and management of epidemics and effective response to these; coordinating community response to infectious diseases; prevention of the emergence of antimicrobial resistance and/or dissemination of resistant strains; and minimization of the impact of HAI infections on the environment. The report is available at: [www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/WHO_HSE_EPR_2009_1/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/WHO_HSE_EPR_2009_1/en/index.html)

**WHAT’S NEW IN THE WHO REGIONS**

• **AFRO: Mission to support IHR implementation at points of entry at country level, 2–14 March 2009, Botswana**

The objectives of this mission, co-organized by AFRO and the Hamburg Port Health Centre, were to develop a draft strategy on port health control measures and provide guidance to port health authorities. To this end, on site visits were made to one airport and two border crossings. For further information please contact ihrtransport@who.int.

• **AFRO: Assessment of national surveillance and response capacities, 9–15 February 2009, Sierra Leone**

A WHO team comprised of technical experts from AFRO, the WHO Country Office and IHR Coordination, Geneva supported the health authorities in Sierra Leone in conducting an assessment of national surveillance and response capacities for IHR in accordance with Annex 1A of the Regulations. For further information please visit: [www.who.int/csr/ihr/capacity/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/ihr/capacity/en/index.html)

• **EMRO: Assessment of national surveillance and response capacities, 5–15 January 2009, Yemen**

A WHO team comprised of technical experts from EMRO, the WHO Country Office and IHR Coordination, Geneva and Lyon supported the health authorities in Yemen to conduct an assessment of national surveillance and response capacities for IHR in accordance with Annex 1A of the Regulations. For further information please visit: [www.who.int/csr/ihr/capacity/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/ihr/capacity/en/index.html)
• **EMRO: Assessment of core capacities and action plans for IHR implementation in Iraq, 7–13 March 2009, Amman, Jordan**

The main objectives of this meeting were to identify core capacities to support IHR implementation at the local/community and/or primary public health response level and at the intermediate and national level; to provide guidance on the use of assessment tools; to identify ways to integrate IHR requirements into existing public health laws in Iraq; and to agree the IHR core capacity requirements for points of entry in the country. Participants included technical experts from the WHO Country Office, EMRO and IHR Coordination.

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**EURO: Participation in EU REACT project - Response to Emerging infectious disease: Assessment and development of Core capacities and Tools**

The EU REACT project covers a range of work areas including international contact tracing after exposure to infectious diseases. It is lead by the Robert Koch Institute. Visit REACT: [www.rki.de/cln_100/nn_1201208/EN/Content/Prevention/React/react_node.html?nnn=true](http://www.rki.de/cln_100/nn_1201208/EN/Content/Prevention/React/react_node.html?nnn=true)

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This workshop, organized by PAHO/AMRO with the support of IHR Coordination, Geneva and the participation of the Public Health Agency of Canada, brought together legal and other experts from countries in the Caribbean sub-region. The objective was to discuss needs in order to assess and revise national legislation to facilitate full IHR implementation. Guidance materials concerning IHR implementation in national legislation are available at [www.who.int/csr/ihr/legislation/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/ihr/legislation/en/index.html)
### FACTS AND FIGURES

- **Update on IHR implementation in countries**

(Figures as at 25 March 2009)

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This newsletter seeks to provide useful information for NFPs, countries and partners in implementing the IHR. We welcome your suggestions and comments and invite you to send these to Ms Sophia Desillas at desillass@lyon.who.int