In collaboration with the International Clearinghouse for Birth Defects Surveillance and Research (ICBDSR) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Training programme on surveillance and prevention of congenital anomalies and preterm births
WHO Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland, 7-11 July 2014

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

Congenital anomalies (also referred as birth defects) and preterm birth are or will be leading causes of childhood death, chronic illness, and disability in many countries, including developing countries. In an effort to address the emerging importance of birth defects, the WHO Assembly on May 21, 2010 adopted a resolution calling all Member States to promote primary prevention and the children with birth defects by: developing and strengthening registration and surveillance systems; developing expertise and building capacity; strengthening research and studies on aetiology, diagnosis and prevention; and promoting international cooperation. It has been recognized the diversity of causes and determinants of congenital disorders, including preventable factors such as infections or nutritional factors, vaccine-preventable diseases, consumption of alcohol, tobacco and drugs, and exposure to pesticides.

Iodine and folate inadequacies have been associated with birth defects and interventions aiming to improve intake of these micronutrients are recommended. Folic acid supplementation, food fortification of staple foods such as wheat and maize flours with folic acid, salt iodization or iodine supplementation in areas where salt iodization programmes are not yet fully implemented are recommended. An effective surveillance programme requires capacity in the countries to be built in order to strengthen registration and surveillance systems for birth defects within the framework of national health information systems and to use accurate information decision-making on prevention and control of birth defects and their determinants through effectively implemented actions.

WHO Departments of Reproductive Health and Research and Nutrition for Health and Development in collaboration with the International Clearinghouse for Birth Defects Surveillance and Research and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are convening a training programme in Geneva, Switzerland from 7-11 July 2014 on surveillance and prevention of birth defects and preterm births. This training programme is now being offered to provide professionals involved with the development and/or strengthening of surveillance in their countries with the necessary set of skills and tools and includes focused lectures and practical small group sessions.

The main objectives of this training workshop are that participants:

1. understand the principles and practice of surveillance of congenital anomalies, premature births and other adverse pregnancy outcomes, including ongoing monitoring and cluster investigation.
2. understand the frequency and risk associated with common modifiable risk factors such as diabetes, nutrition, medications, and environmental factors in different parts of the world.
3. develop a prototype monitoring system and prevention programme for folate-preventable and other neural tube defects that can serve as a model for activities in the home countries of participants.
4. understand and practice the basic principle of data analysis.
Participants will be encouraged to bring data and issues of particular interest to their countries. Further opportunities for interaction will be provided after the course, as participants return to their countries to implement and expand local activities of surveillance and prevention.

Deadlines
Please contact the International Clearinghouse for Birth Defects Surveillance and Research (ICBDSR) Centre at: www.icbdsr.org or write an email to icbd@icbd.org with the subject line: ‘Training Programme 2014’ in the subject line.