

Major events

Assessment and revision of Oman Public Health Law

The first mission in the region to support the national authorities in the process of assessing national public health legislation for compliance with the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR or Regulations) is to support Oman with regard to IHR review of a new draft Public Health Law, took place from 16 to 20 February 2008. This was in accordance with a recommendation from the prior September 2007 mission, regarding an in-depth review of the core public health capacities of surveillance and response under the IHR. National partners essential for IHR implementation were involved in this mission through an assembly meeting on the first day and then individual meetings. These are: Ministries of Agriculture, Environment and Municipalities, Oman police and legal departments.

Editorial note

With the entry of the Regulations into force on 15 June 2007, all 193 WHO Member States are now legally bound to implement the new regulations. For some time, an important matter for State Party consideration has been whether they may wish to assess their existing public health laws in areas covered under the IHR in order to determine whether revision may be appropriate. While the IHR do not require that States Parties revise or enact any particular legislation or regulations, all States Parties now have obligations to carry out the IHR requirements. The IHR, with their "all risks" approach to combating international public health risks, are particularly broad in coverage, including significant risks to public health, whether biological, chemical or otherwise in origin, and whether transmitted by persons, vectors, the environment or goods. The assessment of existing legislation would accordingly need to be broad as well. Among the issues that States Parties may wish to assess, include: whether existing laws authorize States to implement all of

Forthcoming Events:

A mission will be conducted in Pakistan, in coordination with CDC, Atlanta, to assist the national authorities to strengthen their legal framework for surveillance and response under the International Health Regulations (2005). Objectives of the mission are:

1. Advise and educate relevant legal and public health personnel regarding key State Party obligations under the IHR (2005) which may require revision of national legislation;
2. Facilitate and support assessment of national legislation concerning IHR (2005) and any necessary revisions; and
3. Assess and update as necessary legislative frameworks for critical IHR (2005) functions--with particular emphasis on Pakistan.

Djibouti and Sudan have also requested WHO technical assistance to review their national public health laws under IHR (2005).

International Health Regulations (IHR 2005)

Article 3.4 Principles

States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to legislate and to implement legislation in pursuance of their health policies. In doing so they should uphold the purpose of these Regulations.

their rights and obligations under the new IHR. Examples of such issues include the potential legal establishment and operationalization of their National IHR Focal Points, laws on notification or other communications with WHO, adjustments to national public health surveillance and response regulations, implementation of the revised document requirements in the IHR for international shipping and air traffic (such as the Ship Sanitation Certificates, the Maritime Declaration of Health and the Aircraft General Declaration), updated requirements on charges permitted for health measures for international travelers (such as vaccinations) and sanitary measures provided to international aircraft or ships (such as deratting, decontamination and disinsection), and regulations for capacities and operations at international ports, airports and ground crossings.

Important considerations in this process include:

- Considering the need for assessment as early as possible
- Participation of all relevant sectors (including Ministries and departments) in the assessment and revision process;
- Extensive legal and decision-maker participation in the process;
- Considering the need for subregional workshops/meetings on assessment and revision of national public health and related legislation for implementation of IHR (2005); and
- Familiarity with IHR requirements among all key participants and Ministries.

Update on outbreaks in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

AJS: Afghanistan (*No update*). No new events reported in the region during the last two weeks.

Current public health events of international concern

[cumulative N° of cases (deaths), CFR %]

Avian influenza

Egypt	[50 (20), 44%]
Indonesia	[133 (108), 81.2%]

Measles

Norway	[4 (0), 0%]
Benin	[419 (4), 1.0%]

Cholera

Kenya	[1155 (56), 4.8%]
Angola	[5028 (149), 3.0%]

Wild Poliomyelitis

One case detected in S.Sudan, living in Ethiopia. [1 (0), **0%**]

Acute Jaundice Syndrome

Spain	[14 (1), 7.1%]
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Acute Jaundice Syndrome (Pyrrolozidine poisoning)

Afghanistan	[135 (11), 8.1%]
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Dengue fever

Brazil	[93,498 (87), 0.1%]
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(* = Unofficial figures); (# YF Animal case)
CFR = Case-Fatality Rate