

PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS FORUM

Wednesday, 11 August 2010, 2-5pm
Imperial Queen's Park Hotel, Sukhumvit Soi 22, Bangkok



Organised by the
United Nations System Influenza (UNSIIC) Asia-Pacific Regional Hub

Theme: CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACT ON PANDEMICS

The minutes, presentations and other information about this and past Pandemic Preparedness Forums can be found on the United Nations influenza website at <http://un-influenza.org/node/3730>

Chair: Mr. C Y Gopinath, Regional Communication Coordinator, FAP RAP

Organizations present:

1. American Red Cross
2. Asia-Europe Environment Forum (ENVforum) Programme, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)
3. National Institute of Animal Health (NIAH), Japan
4. Asia Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC)
5. DAI
6. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), RAP
7. IFC Macro
8. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
9. International Organization of Animal Health (OIE)
10. Murdock University
11. Rapid Asia
12. Thai Red Cross Society
13. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA/PIC)
14. United Nations System Influenza Coordination (UNSIIC)

Total: 14

14:00 Introductions of participants

Presentation: 'Global warming and infectious diseases'

14:20 Presentation by Dr. Takehiko Saito, Team Leader, Zoonosis Research Team, National Institute of Animal Health (NIAH), Japan

Dr. Saito presented that although the climate (more in terms of precipitation and less temperature) affects vector and reservoir distributions, the direct association with emerging infectious diseases is yet to be established. He mentioned that the impact of climate change on human infectious diseases is likely to be mediated by such intermediate factors as human migration, hygiene status, animal production and human-animal interface.

(Please see PowerPoint presentation slides on website)

15:20 Q&A

Q: (UNSIIC) Is influenza seasonality also caused by temperature and precipitation in temperate zone?

A: No. Many Japanese ask that question, but there is no evidence that cool and dry temperature increases viral viability. In fact, tropical countries like Thailand have a summer peak. Human activity pattern (gathering, etc.) seems to be more important.

Comment: (ADPC) Climate change affects human activities. Though changes in habitats, disasters and poverty, etc., it may affect infectious diseases incidence, thus may also influence the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

A: Agreed.

Comment: (Murdock University) Diseases are multi-factorial. Climate change might affect the distributions of vectors and reservoirs. Climate alteration affects diseases certainly and it is a general understanding.

Comment: (UNSIIC) Climate change impacts will be unpredictable (can even be bi-directional) given existence of multiple intermediate factors between climate and infectious diseases.

Comment: (Murdock University) In the incidence of Rift-valley fever, rain fall impacts the vector (mosquitoes) and reservoirs at the same time.

Q: (FAO) Does the melting of ice-caps impact the incidence of diseases?

A: There is no such understanding.

Comment: (OIE) Main concept is change. We need to strengthen the structures of response.

Presentation: 'Zoonotic Diseases "One Health Initiative" Training Package, workshop update

15.50 Presentation by Dr. Stan Fenwick, Murdock University

ADPC, in collaboration with Murdock and Chang Mai Universities and IFC Macro, has conducted the workshop on zoonotic diseases "One Health" training package in Bangkok during 2-6 August 2010. A concise update was presented.

(Please see PowerPoint presentation slides on website)

16:35 Q&A

Presentation: 'Climate change and health: an environmentalist perspective'

15.50 Presentation by Ms. Grazyna Pulawska, Asia-Europe Environment Forum (ENVforum) Programme, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

(Please see PowerPoint presentation slides on website)

16:35 Q&A

Q: (Rapid Asia) Sweden this year experienced a heat wave and infestation of bees. Why is the presenter is rather sceptical about the climate change impact on emerging infectious diseases (which seems to be tangible)?

A: Because I am not a scientist, it is difficult to tap into the scientific evidence.

Q: (UNSIK) What is the anticipated timeline of a tangible climate change?

A: The consequences of climate change will be experienced by the next generations.

Q: (ADPC): Psychological effect related with disaster is important. What can we do with climate change?

A: Change of consumers' habits in which they pay more attention on where all the goods are coming from and what environmental effects it may imply (meat, etc.). Technical innovation also may be needed.

Comment: (UNSIK) Tackling safe injection and healthcare waste management requires balancing domestic and universal risks as well as current and future risks. The same may be true for climate change. It is important for public policy formulation to have it on the table.

Comment: (Rapid Asia): More focus on how to adapt to the inevitable climate change seems more important within the scope of the Pandemic Preparedness Forum.

A: Both preventive efforts and preparedness are important.