



R E S O L U T I O N

REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR
THE WESTERN PACIFIC

COMITE REGIONAL DU
PACIFIQUE OCCIDENTAL

WPR/RC58.R3
14 September 2007

AVIAN AND PANDEMIC INFLUENZA, THE INTERNATIONAL HEALTH
REGULATIONS (2005) AND THE ASIA PACIFIC STRATEGY
FOR EMERGING DISEASES

The Regional Committee,

Recalling resolutions WHA48.13 on new emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, WHA58.3 on the revision of the International Health Regulations (IHR), WHA58.5 on strengthening pandemic influenza preparedness and response, WHA60.28 on sharing of influenza viruses and access to vaccines and benefits, and WHA59.2 on the application of the International Health Regulations (2005);

Further recalling resolution WPR/RC56.R4 on the Asia Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases (APSED) and resolution WPR/RC57.R2 on APSED, the IHR (2005) and avian influenza, which urged Member States to develop and implement national plans of action for APSED implementation to ensure effective pandemic preparedness and the establishment of the core capacities under the IHR (2005);

Reaffirming the continuing pandemic influenza risk due to ongoing outbreaks of avian influenza, and other public health threats arising from emerging infectious diseases in the Region;

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Further reaffirming the importance of a multisectoral approach in combating threats associated with future pandemic influenzas and other emerging infectious diseases;

Aware that the IHR (2005) entered into force on 15 June 2007 and all Member States in the Region have now started implementing these Regulations to contribute to national, regional and international public health security;

Noting the following regional goal for implementing APSED to meet the IHR core capacity requirements: all countries and areas of the Asian Pacific Region will have the minimum capacity for epidemic alert and response by 2010;

Recognizing that while much progress has been made to implement APSED, significant challenges remain in all APSED programme areas (i.e. surveillance and response, laboratory, zoonoses, infection control and risk communications) to achieve the regional goal due to current weakness in public health systems and inadequate national programmes for emerging infectious diseases;

Recognizing also the urgent need for immediate action to develop the minimum capacity for avian and pandemic influenza, to conduct country capacity assessments and to develop and implement national plans of action to strengthen national capacity for effective preparedness, early detection and rapid response to disease events;

Further recognizing the importance of all Member States sharing clinical specimens, viruses and data in a timely manner within the Global Influenza Surveillance Network;

Stressing the need for further strengthening and maintaining the regional outbreak alert system and capacity;

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Having reviewed the conclusions and recommendations of the second Meeting of the Asia Pacific Technical Advisory Group on Emerging Infectious Diseases and the Meeting of Emerging Infectious Disease Programme Managers and national IHR focal points,

1. ENDORSES the recommendations of the second meeting of the Asia Pacific Technical Advisory Group on Emerging Infectious Diseases and its implementation in the Western Pacific Region;
2. URGES Member States:
 - (1) to continue to test and validate their pandemic influenza preparedness plans through appropriate exercises and to develop and strengthen the minimum capacity required for responding to avian influenza outbreaks, preparing for pandemic influenza rapid containment operations and improving pandemic response;
 - (2) to review and, where necessary, adjust their national laws, policies and procedures in order to come into compliance with the IHR (2005);
 - (3) to operationalize the national IHR focal points (NFPs) by ensuring the availability of basic means of communications and developing and implementing effective communications protocols;
 - (4) to continue to conduct country assessments and, as a result of such assessments, to develop and implement national plans of action for the implementation of the Asia Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases to ensure effective pandemic preparedness and the establishment of the core capacities required under the IHR (2005);
 - (5) to support and contribute to strengthening and maintaining an effective regional outbreak alert and response system and its operational capacities;

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(6) to submit reports on progress on the implementation of APSED for review at the next meeting of the Asia Pacific Technical Advisory Group on Emerging Infectious Diseases;

3. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

(1) to continue to work with the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia, all relevant partners and Member States to implement the recommendations of the second meeting of the Asia Pacific Technical Advisory Group on Emerging Infectious Diseases;

(2) to assist countries in achieving the minimum capacity required for avian influenza and pandemic preparedness through implementation of the WHO APSED workplans;

(3) to bring to the attention of the Director-General and other Regional Directors the concerns expressed by the Regional Committee related to virus sharing and the need to take all appropriate measures to promote a successful outcome of the November 2007 intergovernmental meeting referred to in resolution WHA60.28;

(4) to support the efforts of Member States to strengthen the mandatory functions of national IHR focal points;

(5) to support Member States in assessing their existing surveillance and response systems, and in developing country APSED workplans for strengthening the core capacities required by the IHR (2005);

(6) to mobilize resources necessary for WHO to ensure the implementation of the APSED workplan and to fulfil the responsibilities required under the IHR (2005);

(7) to report back regularly the progress on the implementation of the WHO APSED workplan to the Regional Committee.