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Invest Today for a Safer Tomorrow

Event Report

Name and Type of Event	The Towards A Safer World Network of Pandemic Preparedness Practitioners: “Taking Stock of Achievements: Charting Future Directions”
Date	20 May 2013
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Number of Participants	45

1) Key messages, outcomes and recommendations

Key messages:

- Health is a key contributor to and an outcome of disaster risk reduction.
- It is important to incorporate health and pandemic preparedness into the HFA2. TASW network could play an important role to achieve this.
- No one sector or actor can face disasters alone. The interdependency of sectors and agencies is evident. Collaboration is not an option, it is a must. A Whole of Society Approach is needed.
- It is vital to connect among and within sectors, agencies and countries to effectively respond to threats including transboundary risks such as epidemics and pandemics. Transparency and information sharing between the different actors is vital.
- It is essential to be prepared for the worst case scenario. Focus is on building strong and resilient systems and building capacities in-countries.
- Investment in preparedness has to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development funding mechanisms. Advocate for preparedness as a “public good”. Public-private partnership is important to achieve disaster risk reduction.
- TASW is supporting collective preparedness through promoting learning, communication and capacity development. TASW does this through networking, partnerships and building linkages between committed professionals in the different entities including governments, civil society, NGOs, academia, private sector and regional and international organizations.
- Tools to support shared preparedness for DRR are available including frameworks and plans of actions, contingency and business continuity planning, simulation exercises and inventory of expertise and capacities.

Outcomes and recommendations

In line with its mandate to identify and assess disaster risk, the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction is well placed to support the Towards a Safer World (TASW) network. The HFA2 could be used as an anchor for TASW network.

Participants emphasized the need to sustain pandemic preparedness among the TASW network through regular meetings, and sharing of information through newsletter and the website. They will also seek to link with different networks at all levels.

Lessons learned from pandemic preparedness have been used for other emerging threats. However, some gaps still exist; some because of lack of resources for preparedness. Working together, through TASW and other platforms, could fill these gaps. These include defining the economic impact of emerging threats, clarify the concept of resilience and the strategies and tactics to achieve it, link civil societies and governments and link scientist and policy makers, identify hubs to provide necessary regional and national support, and conduct leadership stress tests.

2) What are specific recommendations and concrete examples for the main topics, themes and issues to be addressed in the HFA2?

The outcome of HFA2 is protecting people health and wellbeing. Therefore, health should be included in all UN policies and plans for DRR including the HFA2. Momentum has been built by the disaster reduction community to build on past lessons and integrate a multi-hazard approach. However, we still need to make sure hazards include epidemics and biological threats.

We need to work out how to integrate new and emerging risks and threats. The IHR is a powerful legal instrument for identification and reporting of public health events of international concern. The IHR should be aligned more with the HFA in order to build on the strengths of each instrument and ensure mutual reinforcement and advocate for uniting around international standards.

TASW network could play a key role in the HFA priorities for action to ensure better health outcomes for people at risk from disasters as illustrated in this table.

HFA Priorities for Action	Role of TASW Network Members in the HFA
1. Make Disaster Risk Reduction a Priority	Advocate a multi-sector approach to pandemic preparedness.
2. Know the Risks and Take Action	Coordinate issues related to Whole-of-Society pandemic preparedness and response, and financing for preparedness.
3. Build Understanding and Awareness	Build a common messaging system.
4. Reduce Risk	Support and address the One Health approach to tackle challenges arising from the animal-human interface.
5. Be Prepared and Ready to Act	Work with the Tripartite of One Health agencies (FAO, OIE and WHO) to provide technical direction, and ensure coordinated action across the System.

TASW network is particularly important to achieve HFA priority action 4 (reducing risks), which would be the major focus of HFA2, through sharing and using of practical guidance and best practices. A roadmap on how HFA policies are to be implemented at national level is needed.

TASW will engage in multistakeholder processes to develop HFA2 over the next 2 years (Including Regional Platforms, National Dialogues and intergovernmental meetings) advocating for continuing focus on prevention and preparedness for emerging health threats.

Finally, it is important to measure our state of preparedness at all levels. Setting up goals, targets and indicators would be extremely useful. Assessment done of pandemic preparedness at national level could be used as a benchmark for measurement.