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PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE: FINAL REPORT

Background

1. The purpose of this document is to report to the Governing Bodies of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) on achievements during the period 2015-2019 in executing the *Plan of Action for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance* (Document CD53/12) (1), adopted by the 53th Directing Council of PAHO in October 2014 (Resolution CD53.R9) (2).
2. The plan of action is intended to facilitate strengthening the health sector in Member States and improve the coordination of health-related humanitarian assistance sent and received during emergencies and disasters.

Progress Update

3. This report is based on updates received from Member States in regional meetings of disaster coordinators of health ministries, from the PAHO/WHO country offices, and through direct coordination with subregional entities and agencies. It also includes information from the databases maintained by the Pan American Sanitary Bureau.
 4. The plan of action includes three strategic lines of action: 1) strategic alliances, cooperation among countries, and international agreements; 2) foreign medical teams; and 3) leadership, coordination, and accountability.
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Strategic Line of Action 1: Strategic alliances, cooperation among countries, and international agreements

Objective 1.1: Increase partnerships and cooperation for rapid and effective international health assistance	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
<p>1.1.1. Number of multilateral agreements that facilitate humanitarian health assistance</p> <p>Baseline: 3 Target (2019): 5</p>	<p>The target for this indicator was not met. The South American Council of Health has agreed to recognize the standardization initiative for national and foreign emergency medical teams (EMTs) (3).</p>
<p>1.1.2. Number of countries that participate in the inter-American health sector network for emergencies</p> <p>Baseline: 0 Target (2019): 15</p>	<p>The target for this indicator was not met. A total of 12 countries have agreed to establish, facilitate, and hasten the development of regulations and mechanisms for implementing the Inter-American Emergency Health Network.</p>
<p>1.1.3. Number of countries that participate in the inter-American health logistics network</p> <p>Baseline: 0 Target (2019): 15</p>	<p>The target for this indicator was not met. A total of five countries have designated focal points to participate actively in the logistic network for health humanitarian assistance and share knowledge and capabilities (4). In addition, a logistic support agreement is in place with one country and the network of strategic reserve centers has been expanded to four countries.</p>

Strategic Line of Action 2: Foreign medical teams

Objective 2.1: Establish a regional mechanism for registry of foreign medical teams	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
<p>2.1.1 Number of countries that implement the system for registry of foreign medical teams</p> <p>Baseline: 0 Target (2019): 25</p>	<p>The target for this indicator was not met. A total of 12 countries have implemented the methodology for requesting, registering, and coordinating emergency medical teams. A total of 122 experts from 35 countries and territories were trained in this methodology.¹ Two countries have published regulations and manuals on the implementation of standards for emergency medical teams and systems for their registration and coordination.</p>

¹ Based on national reports on implementation of the standardization initiative for emergency medical teams within the country focal point network of the Regional EMT Group of the Americas, updated to 27 January 2020 (PAHO Health Emergencies Department, Country Health Emergency Preparedness and IHR Unit).

Objective 2.1: Establish a regional mechanism for registry of foreign medical teams	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
<p>2.1.2 Number of countries that have up-to-date procedures for receipt and provision of international health assistance</p> <p>Baseline: 5 Target (2019): 25</p>	<p>The target for this indicator was met. Personnel in a total of 39 countries and territories were trained in procedures to coordinate the receipt and deployment of emergency medical teams. A virtual platform (Virtual CICOM) has been developed for the use by the Member States in receiving and deploying foreign teams. Nine countries are integrating these procedures into their national mechanisms (5).</p>

Strategic Line of Action 3: Leadership, coordination, and accountability

Objective 3.1: Strengthen the capacity of the ministries of health to lead and coordinate international humanitarian assistance	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
<p>3.1.1 Number of ministries of health that have mechanisms for coordination of humanitarian health assistance</p> <p>Baseline: 3 Target (2019): 20</p>	<p>The target for this indicator was met. A total of 32 countries and territories have established a national committee for health emergencies and disasters. In addition, 33 countries and territories have installed an emergency operations center for the coordination of humanitarian assistance.²</p>
<p>3.1.2 Number of countries with personnel trained to coordinate humanitarian health assistance</p> <p>Baseline: 3 Target (2019): 20</p>	<p>The target for this indicator was met. Toward achieving this objective, workshops were conducted to raise awareness about implementing and strengthening coordination mechanisms within the ministries of health, with the participation of 11 countries (6). In addition, 175 experts from 30 countries participated in a number of workshops and trainings aimed at building capacity in the coordination of humanitarian assistance and emergency response (7, 8).</p>

² Based on data from monitoring the execution of the Plan of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction 2016-2021, updated to 8 September 2020 (PAHO Health Emergencies Department, Country Health Emergency Preparedness and IHR Unit).

Actions needed to improve the situation

5. In light of the results and challenges described in this report, the following actions are proposed for consideration by Member States:

- a) Disseminate and work toward meeting the targets of this plan of action as part of the strategic plan of the Health Emergencies Department, and monitor this effort to ensure its sustainability.
- b) Continue to promote the emergency medical team (EMT) initiative to facilitate training, requests for, and registration of national and foreign medical teams, as well as development of the medical information and coordination cell (CICOM).
- c) Continue to incorporate additional countries into the Pan American Health and Logistics Network, and to establish, harmonize, and disseminate procedures for the mobilization (lending, donation, replenishment, etc.) of medical supplies.

Action by the Directing Council

6. In view of the extraordinary and unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, pursuant to Resolution CE166.R7, this document is being published for information purposes only and will not be addressed by the Directing Council.

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