

53rd DIRECTING COUNCIL

66th SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF WHO FOR THE AMERICAS

Washington, D.C., USA, 29 September-3 October 2014

Provisional Agenda Item 8.6

CD53/INF/6
14 August 2014
Original: English

F. PLAN OF ACTION ON SAFE HOSPITALS

Background

1. The purpose of this document is to report to the Governing Bodies of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) on the progress made in implementing Resolution CD50.R15, Plan of Action on Safe Hospitals, adopted in October 2010. The Plan of Action seeks to facilitate Member States' adoption of "Hospitals Safe from Disaster" as a national risk reduction policy and urges them to work toward the goal of building all new hospitals with a level of protection that better guarantees that they will remain functional in disaster situations. It also calls for appropriate mitigation measures in existing health facilities.

2. Resolution CD50.R15 also requested the Pan American Sanitary Bureau (PASB) to submit periodic progress reports to the Governing Bodies on the implementation of the Plan of Action, which has six objectives, each with defined goals.

Update on Progress Achieved

Progress toward the goals

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Goals</i>	<i>Status</i>
1	By 2011, 80% of the countries will have established a national safe hospitals program.	24 countries (69%) have a formal safe hospitals program; 33 countries (94%) include disaster risk reduction in the health sector; 20 countries (57%) have a national safe hospitals policy.

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Goals</i>	<i>Status</i>
2	By 2013, 90% of the countries will have an information system on the construction of new hospitals or the improvement of existing hospitals.	31 countries (89%) have a database of the hospitals assessed using the Hospital Safety Index.
3	By 2013, at least 80% of the countries in the Region will have established mechanisms for the supervision of hospital construction work and other investments in health facilities.	15 countries (43%) have formally established independent supervision mechanisms for hospital construction.
4	By 2015, all countries will have included measures that guarantee the operation of health facilities in the event of a disaster in all new health investment projects.	18 countries (51%) with new health investment projects have included safe hospital concepts in them.
5	By 2015, 90% of the countries will have up-to-date standards for the design, construction, and operation of new, safe health facilities.	18 countries (51%) have up-to-date standards for the design of safe health facilities.
6	By 2015, at least 90% of the countries will have improved the safety of the existing health facilities in disasters.	34 countries (97%) are improving the safety of their health facilities by implementing disaster reduction interventions.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

- a) The development and use of the Hospital Safety Index tool has enabled countries to transition from a purely qualitative system to a standardized scoring system. It provides national authorities with comprehensive information on the level of safety of their health services so that they can prioritize and implement interventions.
- b) Even though many countries are allocating substantial funds for the implementation of corrective measures to improve the safety of health facilities, it is still a challenge to convey these priorities to the financial sector and to higher political and decision-making levels.
- c) Despite the progress made, ensuring that all new health facilities are safe from disasters and improving the safety of existing facilities remains a major challenge.
- d) Strengthening multisectoral participation of stakeholders both within and outside the health sector is critical for achieving success. For example, the countries with

greater success in implementing the Safe Hospitals Initiative¹ are those where the national disaster management organization assumed an active role along with the health sector.

Action Necessary to Improve the Situation

- a) Foster and guarantee inclusion of the provisions of the Safe Hospitals Initiative and Plan of Action into government policies.
- b) Promote the strengthening of the health services network and the development of disaster response plans for the health sector and hospitals.
- c) Strengthen capacities and certification of hospital safety assessment teams.
- d) Create awareness within civil society on the importance of having hospitals and health centers that continue operating at their maximum capacity during emergencies and disasters.

Action by the Directing Council

- 3. The Directing Council is invited to take note of this progress report and offer any recommendations it deems necessary.

¹ PAHO Resolution CSP27.R14, Safe Hospitals: Regional Initiative on Disaster Resilient health Facilities (2007).