



International Strategy for
Disaster Reduction



World Health
Organization



THE WORLD BANK



Photo by WHO/Olivia Black

Hospitals Safe from Disasters

2009

International Day for Disaster Reduction

Wednesday 14 October



United Nations

The International Day for Disaster Reduction raises the profile of disaster risk reduction and encourages every citizen and government to take part in building more resilient communities and nations.

www.unisdr.org

Invest Today for a Safer Tomorrow



Essentials for making health facilities safer

- Develop and implement national policies and programmes to make health facilities safe in emergencies.
- Select a safe site for the health facility.
- Design and construct safe health facilities.
- Assess the safety of existing health facilities.
- Protect health workers, equipment, medicines and supplies.
- Ensure that health facilities receive essential services.
- Develop partnerships between health facilities and the community.
- Develop an emergency risk management programme for individual health facilities.
- Develop an emergency response plan for each health facility.
- Test and update response plans with drills and exercises.
- Train the health workers to respond to emergencies.
- Evaluate and learn lessons from past emergencies and disasters.

Source: WHO

Message

The 2009 International Day for Disaster Reduction focuses on the safety and function of hospital and health facilities in disasters. In 2009, the force of natural calamities has been revealed once again. Recent typhoons in the Philippines, Vietnam and China, the tsunami in Samoa and the earthquakes in Indonesia, the West African floods and Kenya's chronic drought conditions are reminders of how vulnerable we are to natural hazards and extreme weather events.

Disaster risk reduction is an indispensable tool to protect the health, welfare and assets of people and countries. Protecting hospitals and health facilities is a priority action to reduce disaster impacts worldwide and a common challenge that faces the international community and individual countries together.

In 2008, with the support of the World Bank, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) and the World Health Organization (WHO) launched a biennial World Disaster Reduction Campaign: Hospitals Safe from Disasters and worked closely with governments and international and regional organizations to better protect health facilities and hospitals and ensure they can function both during and in the aftermath of disasters.

Two years later, a lot has been done to raise awareness about hospital safety. Health task forces that bring together all stakeholders have been established, workshops held and projects to implement building codes and train staff carried out. Despite the end of the two-year campaign, the work towards safer hospitals continues, with more initiatives about to be launched: a WHO Global Programme on Safe Hospitals; a pledging campaign on safer hospitals and schools in the Asia Pacific region; and the creation of a Thematic Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction for Health.

The International Day for Disaster Reduction marks the culmination of the 2008-2009 World Disaster Reduction Campaign and highlights the efforts taking place worldwide to reduce risk, protect health facilities and save lives. Yet much remains to be done and further investments are needed. According to a recent WHO survey, only 50% of all countries' health sectors have allocated a budget for risk reduction and emergency preparedness.

In this context, we urge nations to take the necessary steps to make hospitals safe from disaster. We call upon the global community to build new hospitals that will withstand the impacts of natural hazards; assess and make existing facilities safer; and ensure the staff of health facilities are trained and prepared to respond to emergencies and disasters.

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Hospitals safe from disaster

World Disaster Reduction Campaign 2008-2009

Why?

The price we pay for the failure of hospitals or health facilities due to disasters is high. By comparison, the cost of making hospitals safe from disasters is small. Disaster damage to health systems is a human tragedy, resulting in economic losses, dealing devastating blows to development goals and shaking social confidence. Making hospitals and health facilities safe from disasters is an economic requirement as well as a social, moral and ethical imperative.



What has been done to date?

Asia Pacific Task Force on Safe Hospitals

A multi-stakeholder Asia Pacific Task Force on Safe Hospitals has been established, which implements projects and advocates actively for making health facilities safer. As a result, the Health Ministers of WHO's South East Asia region have adopted the Kathmandu Declaration on Protecting Health Facilities from Disasters, taking up the goals and objectives of the Campaign and officially committing to them.

Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

Hospital safety was a key element of the Second Session of the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction. The Chair's Summary identified the following targets: by 2011, national assessments of the safety of existing health facilities to be undertaken, and by 2015, concrete action plans for and hospitals to be developed and implemented in all disaster prone countries.

Hospital Safety Index

The Hospital Safety Index, a checklist created by PAHO for assessing hospital preparedness and a rapid, reliable and low-cost diagnostic tool, was developed further. It was adapted and applied to many facilities in Latin America and in other regions and countries such as Oman, Sudan and Tajikistan.

Good practices

UNISDR and WHO collected replicable good practices on making hospitals safe from disasters, including initiatives on structural and non-structural safety, keeping hospitals working through disasters, and hospital and staff preparedness. Selected good practices will be made available in a publication later this year.

WHO World Health Day

The protection of health facilities from disasters is a priority issue for the World Health Organization. Building on the momentum of the two-year initiative, WHO dedicated its 2009 World Health Day to "Save lives. Make hospitals safe in emergencies." The campaign has been embraced by WHO's global network, which works closely with 192 national health authorities. Websites, meetings, films, media interviews and more have been used to raise awareness around this vital theme.

What's next?

The International Day for Disaster Reduction 2009 marks the launch of the Thematic Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction for Health. This platform creates a "community" to ensuring health is a central component in the field of disaster risk reduction.

The theme of the 2010-2011 World Disaster Reduction Campaign will be Building Resilient Cities, Addressing Urban Risk. Hospitals that serve as critical infrastructure in cities will remain one of the main elements of the new UNISDR city campaign.

The Global Programme on Safe Hospitals will continue to focus on advocacy and partnership among governments, financial institutions, the health sector and partners for the construction, assessment, retrofit and emergency preparedness of safer health facilities. The use of the Hospital Safety Index to assess globally the safety of health facilities will be a significant step to make more hospitals safer around the world.

Examples of hospitals damaged in disasters

- 2001** 3812 health facilities were destroyed in the Gujarat's earthquake, India
- 2003** 50% of health facilities were damaged in the affected area after an earthquake in Algeria
- 2004** 61% of health facilities were damaged in Indonesia's northern Aceh province after the 2004 Tsunami.
- 2005** 49% of health facilities completely were destroyed by the earthquake in northern Pakistan
- 2008** 57% of all health facilities were damaged and one in five completely destroyed in the area of Myanmar affected by Cyclone Nargis
- 2008** 11,028 health facilities were damaged or destroyed by the Wenchuan earthquake, China
- 2008** A 175-bed Providence Hospital was completely lost due to three successive hurricanes in Gonaives, Haiti
- 2009** Many hospitals collapsed or were badly damaged by disasters in Burkina Faso, Indonesia, Italy, Nepal, Samoa and Tonga

Major events worldwide on International Day for Disaster Reduction 2009

London, United Kingdom

This event will be hosted by the UK Health Protection Agency in collaboration with WHO and UNISDR. The event will include keynote speeches by John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Chair of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and other influential figures involved in international and national efforts to reduce local and national disaster risks and other emergencies. Several key initiatives will be launched, including the announcement of a Thematic Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction for Health and the release of a new London Five Hospitals Fire Report by the National Health Service .

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Dushanbe, Tajikistan

UNISDR will coordinate a region-wide photo contest on "Hospitals Safe from Disasters" and a meeting with university students and a National Public Awareness Campaign on Safe Hospitals. Also, the ECO International Conference on disaster risk management in Tajikistan is dedicated to the International Day for Disaster Reduction.

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Kathmandu, Nepal

A symposium on scaling up risk reduction efforts in Nepal will be held including the presentation of a new disaster risk reduction programme for Nepal by a joint consortium (World Bank, Asian Development Bank, IFRC, OCHA and UNDP). A field trip for media to a melting glacier is also planned to highlight the negative impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations.

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Bangkok, Thailand

UNISDR, together with the ASEAN Secretariat and UNESCAP, will hold an Awards Ceremony and exhibition for a regional drawing competition entitled 'Safe Hospitals – Hospitals in ASEAN Safe from Disaster' and will organize a panel discussion on the issue.

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Maldives

UNISDR and partners (WHO, IFRC/MRC, UNDP, the Maldivian Ministry of Education, the National Disaster Management Centre and TV Maldives) will organize a field trip for school children to Dhuvaafaru Island, which was severely hit by the 2004 tsunami. A television debate among the children will be aired and the awards ceremony of a drawing competition will be held.

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Panama

UNISDR and the regional partners of the campaign (IFRC, Plan International, PAHO, UNICEF) will organize a public concert of the Youth Symphonic Orchestra of Panama. The awards ceremony of the regional Photo & Article Contest will be part of the event.

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Nairobi, Kenya

A disaster scenario including a makeshift hospital with equipment and volunteers will be simulated, focusing on the preparedness of local hospitals. A display of information and material on hospital safety will also be shown. UNISDR will partner with WHO, OCHA, the Kenyan Ministry of State for Special Programmes, Kenya Red Cross, St. John Ambulance, Medics 24, Nairobi Hospital and others on this occasion.

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Welkom, Lejweleputswa District Municipality, Free State Province, South Africa

The ISDR Awareness Symposium 2009 'Hospitals Safe from Disasters: Reduce Risk, Protect Health Facilities, Save Lives', will be held on 14-15 October, organized by the South African government with UNISDR support. The session on 'Hospitals and disasters: meeting the challenges of the 2010 Soccer World Cup', is dedicated to the International Day for Disaster Reduction.

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Cairo, Egypt

Linking the International Day for Disaster Reduction and the Arab Environment Day, UNISDR and the League of Arab States, together with the Arab Academy, will host an advocacy event with a film viewing followed by a presentation and discussion on climate change and disaster risk.

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World Health Day 2009:
"Save lives.
Make hospitals
safe in
emergencies"

World Health Day 2009 – a year-long theme – also focuses on the safety of health facilities and the readiness of health workers who treat those affected by emergencies. Health centres and staff are critical lifelines for vulnerable people in disasters - treating injuries, preventing illnesses and caring for people's health needs.

Visit the website for more information on the theme and activities: www.who.int/world-health-day/2009/en/index.html

Online Survey -
call for participation
ISDR World Campaign
2010-2011 on urban risk
and resilient cities

Interested in sharing your ideas, views and possible contributions with us to shape the new Campaign?

Nominate a disaster risk reduction champion or a role model city!

UNISDR seeks your input and possible engagement in its new campaign. Please participate in the online survey at: www.unisdr.org/

For a complete list of events, visit: www.unisdr.org