

Newsletter



ISSUE 18 | JUL—SEP 2023

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SEA Regional PHC Forum – Thematic Working Group Meeting at Dhaka

With a focus on collectively strengthening the Thematic Working Group (TWG) papers and accelerating the momentum of the SEAR PHC Forum in the region, the three-day interactive workshop of the SEAR PHC Forum-Thematic Working Groups was convened from 20 to 22 June 2023 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The WHO Bangladesh supported hosting this meeting where delegates from all WHO-SEARO member states, including academia, researchers, development partners, and subject experts, discussed various challenges and opportunities in strengthening the Primary health-focused health system to accelerate progress towards Universal Health Coverage. The third workshop day was dedicated to the Bangladesh case study, where the Additional Director General (Planning & Development), DGHS, presented Bangladesh's primary healthcare system and its challenges. The workshop was graced by Senior Secretary of Health Service Division Dr. Md. Anwar Hossain Howlader and WHO Representative to Bangladesh Dr Bardan Jung Rana.

International Conference on Public Health and Diplomacy



The Hon'ble Prime Minister with delegates, dignitaries from Government and UN organization.

A two-day International Conference on Public Health and Diplomacy, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, has been convened to mark the 75th anniversary of WHO. The Conference was organized in collaboration with the WHO Country Office, with participation from WHO HQ and regional office. Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh graced the opening ceremony as the Chief Guest. Hon'ble Foreign Minister, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, and Health and Foreign Ministers from the WHO South-East Asia region also joined the event. In her statement, the Hon'ble Prime Minister expressed her determination to ensure universal health coverage in Bangladesh. She also called upon the global community to ensure that WHO can play central role in global health governance to serve humanity in next 75 years and beyond.

SEA Regional PHC Forum!



Group photo of the SEA Regional PHC Forum. Photo: WHO staff.

World Malaria Day 2023



To eliminate Malaria and Aedes-borne diseases, the Communicable Diseases Control Unit of the Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare organized a high-level event on World Malaria Day 2023 on 15th June 2023. Mr Zahid Maleque MP, the Hon'ble Minister, MOHFW graced the event as the chief guest, and Dr Bardan Jung Rana, WHO Representative to Bangladesh as a special guest. [Read more](#)

Bi-Monthly Monitoring Meeting

The third bi-monthly monitoring meeting of the WHO and Government Collaborative Programme for PB 2022-2023 was held on 17 August 2023. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Md Saidur Rahman, Additional Secretary (WH) of the Health Services Division. The 54 Program Directors and Program Managers participated in the meeting and showcased significant advancements operating under the biennium PB 2022-23. In the meeting, the utilization of funds from WHO Bangladesh was efficiently verified through rigorous analysis. Dr. Jun Nakagawa from WHO Bangladesh provided a comprehensive overview of the WHO Programme Budget 2024-2025 operational plan. Key decisions emphasized strict adherence to reporting schedules, necessitating timely technical and financial report submission. And clear directives were established for Program Directors and Program Managers (PDPMs), ensuring a seamless partnership between the Government of Bangladesh and WHO



Chief guest and other guests are on the dais. Photo: WHO staff.

GIS introduced in EPI program in Bangladesh!



Glimpse of training; Photo: Dr Nusrat, Dr Faisal, and Md Azim, WHO

The WHO proposed a national EPI to introduce innovative technology like geographical information system (GIS) in the EPI program to strengthen the immunization system in terms of mapping, microplanning, supervision, and monitoring. GIS provides the highest possible support in mapping the equitable distribution of vaccination sites, disease outbreaks, and trends with accurate geospatial data in context to catchment areas, such as high-risk and hard-to-reach, slum population, distance from health facility to service delivery points, etc. [Read more](#)

The first WALK THE TALK in South-East Asia!



Guests are on the dais, photo: External photographer.

On 13 August 2023, Bangladesh embarked on a journey that will leave a mark on the pages of history, inspiring generations and brilliance to meet passion to transform the dreams into reality.

Bangladesh Medical Students' Society (BMSS), with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO) and Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC), organised this remarkable 'WALK THE TALK' event. [Read more](#)

Safe Blood: A Sliver of Hope in Kutubdia Upazila!



Group photo of the SEA Regional PHC Forum. Photo: WHO staff

WHO established well-organized safe blood transfusion services at all seven upazila (Chakoria, Ramu, Moheskali, Pekua, Ukhiya, Teknaf, Kutubdia) of Cox's Bazar district through capacity building, human resource support, and logistic support under the Health and Gender Support Project (HGSP) funded by the World Bank. The labs were strengthened with equipment, consumables, diagnostic kits, reagents. Training of medical technologists and orientation of clinicians on clinical management of blood has enhanced their capacity. [Read more](#)

Mental Health service centers named on MONER BARI/ MONER JANALA/EKTU GOLPO KORI



Collaborative Efforts of WHO Bangladesh and DGDA in the Battle Against AMR

A task force meeting was conducted to monitor Antimicrobial Consumption/Use (AMC/U) in Bangladesh on 3 September 2023. The meeting was presided over by DGDA's Director General and gathered recommendations from key stakeholders, including CDC, IEDCR, DLS, BLRI, BSMMU, DOF, FAO, USAID, USP-PQM+, BHB, Fleming Fund Bangladesh Country grant, and WHO Bangladesh. The stakeholders reviewed the AMC surveillance report for 2021 and provided their feedback on the National Guideline on Dispensing, Use, and Disposal Management of Antimicrobial Drugs in Bangladesh. Additionally, the meeting addressed the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for AMC Surveillance in veterinary medicines, and awareness materials developed in collaboration with WHO Bangladesh for World AMR Awareness Week (WAAW) 2023. The task force members commended DGDA's work approved the AMC surveillance report for 2021 and recommended forming a working group to identify the reasons behind the high consumption of antimicrobial drugs and make necessary policy changes.



Participants are in plenary discussion. Forum. Photo: WHO staff

Providing care- Breaking Stigma!

MONER BARI/ MONER JANALA/EKTU GOLPO KORI are the names used for mental health service centers established at the district and sub-district level at Jashore, Chapainawabganj and Sylhet districts. The center provides various mental health services, including individual and group counseling, pharmacological and psychosocial management, and referrals for mental, neurological, and substance abuse conditions. This center is open to all residents and non-residents of that area and is helping integrate mental health services into primary care. The service is committed to providing high-quality, affordable mental health care. The centers are helping to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and to make mental health care more accessible to all.

World Immunization Week 2023: The Big Catch-Up!

World Immunization Week 2023, with its theme of "The Big Catch-Up," brought renewed focus to the importance of immunization. World Immunization Week 2023 sought to identify and reach out to those who had missed vaccinations during the pandemic, particularly at the Khulna division in Bangladesh. The impressive coverage rates achieved during this week reflect a community's commitment to ensuring a healthier and safer future for all.

The WHO Bangladesh played a pivotal role in the "The Big Catch-Up" advocacy initiative in the Khulna division. This included raising awareness among healthcare providers, community leaders, and parents about the importance of child immunization. Advocacy efforts aimed to dispel vaccine hesitancy, promote the benefits of vaccination, and highlight the role of vaccines in preventing devastating diseases.



Participants of the advocacy session. Photo: WHO staff.

Health Cluster: Rallying Partners Support for the Dengue Outbreak, 2023

The Health Cluster (HC) has become a cornerstone in the coordinated effort to combat the recent Dengue outbreak. Led by the IEDCR and co-led by the WHO, the Health Cluster is the central platform for various organizations supporting the health sector to work together seamlessly. A series of dengue outbreak-specific HC meetings were held on 21 August and 20 September 2023. At these meetings, partners were briefed on the Dengue outbreak including support needed and partners also shared insights into their activities and supports as individual agencies. In this ongoing response, the Health Cluster exemplifies the importance of collaborative humanitarian efforts in the face of health emergencies. It underscores the importance of unified action in safeguarding the health and well-being of the population in times of crisis, reinforcing the cluster's pivotal role in disaster response and recovery in Bangladesh.

Enhance knowledge on Routine EPI and Vaccine preventable disease



SIMO, Sunamganj conducting the session. Photo: WHO staff.

In Bangladesh, school teachers have emerged as crucial supporters of the health sector, especially in rural and underserved areas. They organize health education sessions, conduct awareness campaigns on hygiene and sanitation, and even assist in vaccination drives.

As a key development partner in the country's healthcare system, WHO supports Bangladesh in monitoring and managing vaccine-preventable diseases through NPO Surveillance, Divisional Coordinator, and SIMO network. To enhance knowledge on Routine EPI and Vaccine preventable disease, Surveillance, and Immunization Medical Officers, Sunamganj arranged an orientation for professionals of the education sector of Jagganathpur Upazila of Sunamganj District where 55 Headmasters joined with other Govt officials from the health and education sector on 25 September 2023. In the orientation a brief on government Immunization activities and VPDs surveillance reporting, especially on APF and Suspected Measles case identification and notification was given to the participants.

Health Cluster Meeting



Participants of the Health Cluster Meeting. Photo: WHO staff.

Workshop on 'Measuring Health-related SDGs Indicators'

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), with the technical and financial support of WHO, organized a two-day capacity-building workshop on 'measuring health-related SDGs indicators' on August 2-3, 2023, at Sarah Resort, Gazipur. Seventy-six mid-level officials from relevant government departments participated in this workshop, including MoHFW, DGHS, DGFP, DGDA, DGNM, BBS, SID, PMO, and other government officials at the divisional level. SEARO Expert Ms. Ruchita Rajbhandary, Md Monirul Islam, Additional Secretary (SDG), PMO, and Mr. Pallav Bhatt, TO, conducted the sessions. The workshop aimed to provide detailed concepts and methodology for measuring health-related SDGs and UHC tracer indicators. An important outcome of the workshop was identifying key recommendations from the group activities. These recommendations included coordination among intra and inter-agencies, commitment to create fairer health-related SDG data for all, and the need for more capacity-building at divisional level.



Participants of the capacity building workshop. Photo: WHO staff.

GER orientation of WCO staff



Group photo of the GEHR participants.. Photo: WHO staff.

AMR School Level Awareness Campaign!



Participants of the advocacy session.. Photo: WHO staff.

WHO BAN and DGDA's commitment extended to AMR awareness among youth and school-going children. A school-level awareness program was held in September 2023, where the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) and the National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine (NIPSOM) also collaborated with WHO and DGDA to play a vital role in motivating the students. In that program, distributing informative comic books, an Art competition on AMR, and an experimental study demonstrated positive impacts. An antibiotic coloring book, "The Invention of Penicillin," was introduced to engage and educate children effectively. DGDA also transformed the popular comic book "Tinu-Minu and Super-Bug" into an animated version scheduled for launch during World AMR Awareness Week in 2023.

WCO Staff orientation on GER

With the support of WR Bangladesh WCO leadership, staff orientation sessions/training on Gender, Equity and Human Rights in Health were organized and conducted on July 30&31 and August 1, 2023, in Dhaka. The main purpose of this training was to create, raise and strengthen staff awareness of Gender, Equity, Human Rights and Health Equity across health service delivery. Participants were taken through different key concepts of Gender, Equity and Human Rights which enabled them to have a deeper understanding of how GER matter in Health. This has also been a great opportunity for orienting staff on Gender Inclusive Communication language/non-discriminative communication to embrace diversity and inclusion and not let anyone behind. In total, 110 staff (82 males and 28 females) participated in the training sessions.

Interactive session with PSEA Network Partners

In collaboration with PRS Regional advisor Bangladesh, WCO host interactive meetings with some of PSEA Network members from Dhaka on 29th August 2023 and Cox's Bazar on 30 August 2023. PSEA Network members from UNICEF, UN WOMEN, FAO, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNDSS, UNHCR, ISCG, Humanity Inclusion (HI), RDRS, SARPV, and colleagues from WHO participated in this mutual exchange session. The meeting agenda focused on sharing experience and best practices on what as PSEA Network members do around preventing and responding to Sexual Misconduct. The PSEA Network is doing joint great work at the field and its PSEA work plan is aligned with organizational PRSM action plan.



Group photo of PSEA Network Partners,. Photo: WHO staff.

WHO staff Capacity Building!

A two-day training on basic photography and branding & visibility was held at the BRAC CDM, Saver, on 26-27 July 2023. NPO communication WHO designed this orientation to give a basic understanding of photography and WHO branding & visibility. There are 18 internal staff from different technical teams of WHO Bangladesh joined the training. The training objective was to explain the basics of photography, especially mobile photography, organizational branding, and visibility, capture photos, maintain the basic rules of photography, and ensure proper branding and visibility for the organization.



Individual participation in the exercise. Photo: Salma Sultana, WCO.

#Zero Tolerance, No Excuse for Sexual Misconduct



Group exercise by the participants. Photo: WHO staff.

The World Health Organization Sub Office (WSO) held a staff orientation and refresher training on Prevention and Response to Sexual Misconduct (PRSM) at the Dera Resort in Cox's Bazar on September 14, 2023. The event saw the participation of more than 46 staff members from WSO and 07 attendees who joined online.

The training aimed to raise awareness and enhance the skills of WHO staff on how to prevent, identify, report, and respond to sexual misconduct in the workplace and the field. It introduced WHO's three-year strategy that defines its vision, expected results, and the ten priority actions over the next three years.

The training is part of WHO's ongoing efforts to prevent and address sexual misconduct in line with its core values of integrity, professionalism, and respect for diversity. WHO will continue to provide regular training and support to its staff on this vital topic.

The Health Leaders in the Rohingya Refugee Crisis

"ECHO's support has played a crucial role in saving lives and mitigating the suffering of the most vulnerable communities in Cox's Bazar," said Dr Barshan Jung Rana, WHO Representative to Bangladesh. [Read more](#)



The stockpile database of the emergency health logistics and medical supplies in the WHO warehouses© WHO Bangladesh. Photo: WHO staff

Knowledge Management & Capacity Building Update

Bangladesh commits to place three million with hypertension and diabetes on protocol-based care by 2025!



Group photo of the invitees of the workshop. Photo: WHO staff.

The regional workshop "for implementing the WHO Southeast Asia Regional NCD Roadmap 2022-2030" was organized in Dhaka from 12- 15 June 2023 to support countries in prioritizing and accelerating NCD prevention and management. One of the workshop's outcomes was the 'Dhaka Call to Action – Accelerating the control of CVD in a quarter of the world's population.' Professor Dr Mohammed Robed Amin, Line Director, NCDC programme of DGHS, announced that Bangladesh will make all efforts to place three million people with hypertension and diabetes on protocol-based care by 2025, which will contribute to the regional target of "100 million people with hypertension and diabetes are placed on protocol-based management". To turn commitment into action, the NCDC organized a partner coordination meeting from 9- 10 August 2023 with technical support from the WHO to understand the work related to NCD prevention and control by different partners. All partners were invited to share their experiences and innovations and discuss ways of contributing to the common target of covering 3 million people under protocol-based treatment.

Advancing joint risk assessment using One Health approach

Bangladesh was supported to advance its capacity in conducting joint risk assessment (JRA) at the Human -Animal and Environment interface using the One Health Approach through participation in a WHO SEA Regional meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 25-27 July 2023. WHO coordinated the meeting with FAO and WOAH, while UNEP joined as an observer. Participants were drawn from both human health and animal health/wildlife sectors. Dr Sohel Rahman represented Bangladesh from the Bangladesh One Health Secretariat, and Dr Umme Ruman Siddiqi, assistant director for planning and research at DGHS. Sessions were conducted via plenary presentations in person and remotely, and group work in breakout sessions, including using the Chatham House model. Bangladesh shared its experience in assessing the risk and management of Nipah virus.



Group photo of Joint risk assessment meeting. Photo: WHO SEARO staff.

Spotlight

[Dengue Situation Report](#)

[Bangladesh COVID 19 Situation Report](#)

[Early Warning, Alert and Response System \(EWARS\)](#)

[WHO Representative on BBC](#)

[Dengue awareness message](#)

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U P D A T E

WHO Round Table Discussion!

Social Media Campaign!