



Meeting of the SEAR PHC Forum – Thematic Working Groups

**Dhaka, Bangladesh
20 – 22 June 2023**

Executive Summary





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Executive Summary

The South-East Regional Forum for Primary Health Care-oriented Health Systems (“SEAR PHC Forum”) was launched during the ‘Regional Workshop to Strengthen Primary Health Care in the South-East Asia Region’, 28-30 November 2022, in Bangkok, Thailand. As initiative activity for the SEA Regional PHC Forum, Member State identified 7 areas of bottlenecks, with Member States and Partners jointly establishing associate thematic working groups¹, to capture of operational and implementation-focused learning.


The three-day interactive workshop of the SEAR PHC Forum-Thematic Working Groups was convened in Dhaka, Bangladesh with focus on collectively strengthening the Thematic Working Group (TWG) papers and to accelerate the momentum of the SEAR PHC Forum.

The specific objectives of the Meeting of SEAR PHC Forum-Thematic Working Groups were to:

- To share, discuss and collectively strengthen draft Thematic Working Group papers, as well as ensure synergy across Thematic Working Group papers
- To discuss opportunity for greater synergy and joint activity, as related to TWG operational learning, across the SEAR PHC Forum partners.
- To demonstrate synergized effort of SEAR PHC Forum in context of Bangladesh

Nearly, hundred participants actively participated during the three-day regional workshop. The participants included Member State nominated focal points, additional Member State participants working in specific Thematic Working Groups and

¹ The seven thematic working groups are as follows PHC workforce; Urban PHC; PHC Quality, with focus on medical products; Community engagement; PHC monitoring; PHC Service delivery; and PHC investment case




representatives from key PHC-related partners actively engaged in the Thematic Working Groups, including bilateral partners, international agencies, international financing institutions, philanthropies, implementing agencies, academic institutions, and members of civil society organizations. (See Annexure 1- Agenda; Annexure 2- List of Participants).

The meeting started with opening remarks from the Regional Director, WHO-SEARO, as read by the WHO Representative, Bangladesh. This was followed by welcome remarks from the Secretary, Health Services Division, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Bangladesh who presented on the current PHC-focused challenges in Bangladesh. The WHO-SEAR Coordinator for Integrated Health Services, then set the context of the meeting by providing the background, objectives and expected outcomes of the meeting. This was followed by the Member states and Partners updating their key PHC activities and areas of priority after the launch of the SEAR PHC forum in November 2022. The Deputy Director, PHC Special Programme WHO-HQ concluded the opening session with a brief presentation on the global updates and forthcoming key PHC meetings organized by the WHO Special Programme on Primary Health Care.

During the first day of the meeting, break-out sessions were organized to discuss the following 4 Thematic Working Group papers: PHC Workforce, PHC Quality (Medical Products), Urban PHC and Community Engagement. Discussions in each of the TWG was moderated by the Lead Member state and the coordinating partner. The interactive and breakout format of the sessions enabled discussion and further collective strengthening of the draft Thematic Working Group papers (including sub-themes), including further examples of operational learning. Findings were then presented by the lead member state and partner in the plenary session.

The second day started with the live streaming of the 'Indonesia National Launch of Primary Healthcare Integration, Seminar Series'. The forum members also



expressed their collective support and wishes for the National PHC Integration Launch in Indonesia. Three plenary sessions were next held on 3 key thematic areas: PHC Service delivery, PHC monitoring and PHC investment case. The first plenary on Service delivery started with presentation from the collaborative work of PHFI and WHO-SEARO on 'Crosswalk of Essential Health Service Packages & Service Standards in the South-East Asia Region'. The lead member state (Indonesia) next presented on the Indonesia National PHC Integration and their efforts to standardize services in Puskesmas, Pustu, Posyandu across the life cycle. Discussion took place on the subject in plenary. During the TWG plenary on PHC monitoring, IQVIA and WHO SEARO presented the key findings from the 'Landscape analysis of PHC measurement tools, indicators and approaches in the South-East Asia Region'. Finally, plenary discussion took place on PHC Investment case. The Lead member state (Thailand) and coordinating partner (Access Health Intl) presenting a 'Selection of arguments to enhance and sustain Investments in Primary Health Care in SEAR' followed by rich discussions from the participants. The day concluded with final session on SEAR PHC Forum Governance and reflections from member states and partners.

The third day of the meeting sought to utilize the synergistic effect of the SEAR PHC Forum to support and strengthen PHC in Bangladesh. The day started with a video documentary on Bangladesh Community Clinics (CC), as prepared and shared by the MoHFW Bangladesh. MoHFW Bangladesh representatives next led a virtual dialogue between staff in community clinics and meeting participants. This was followed by a presentation by ADG (Planning & Development)-DGHS, MOHFW, Bangladesh on PHC Progress, Innovations, and Future Directions, with a specific request for SEAR PHC Forum participates to share operational learning. Meeting participants broke out to 3 working groups on areas of priority suggested by Bangladesh: PHC Workforce, Urban PHC and PHC Quality (medical products). Forum participants, including MoHFW Bangladesh distilled a set of potentially relevant recommendations and expressed their support in related areas (See Table 1). This was then presented before the Director

General, DGHS, MOHFW, Bangladesh who provided his reflections and concluding remarks. The meeting followed concluded with Coordinator (IHS) offering the vote of thanks and closing remarks.

In addition to strengthening the thematic working groups, the following key actions were agreed:

1. To jointly plan for the second Annual Meeting of the South-East Asia Regional Forum for PHC-oriented Health Systems scheduled in October 2023 in Sri Lanka, including field visit to view Sri Lanka PHC-oriented health system.
2. To collectively strengthen and finalize the 7 Thematic Working Group papers leading to the annual meeting of the SEAR PHC Forum planned in Sri Lanka, October 2023.
3. To support specific cross-country visits for cross country learning with WHO facilitation and assistance; as well as to collectively strengthen participation in the global PHC movement.
4. To strengthen the SEAR PHC Forum through strengthening connection with academic institutions.
5. To strengthen general communication of the SEAR PHC Forum, including developing and launching the SEAR PHC Forum collaborative web portal.
6. The Director General Health Services, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Bangladesh also suggested to convene a small follow up country-focused meeting in his office to learn more with respect to discussions of the forum.



Table 1: Key Synergized actions for Bangladesh

	Clusters	Actions	Actors	Note
1	PHC workforce	Review evolving PHC team composition against current and future health needs	THA IND (Orissa) MAV SRL WHO	Composition & competency
2		Explore and assessment of HRH competency development	Bhutan	
3		Mid-level management capacity program	HSTP India (Orissa)	
4		Monitoring 'team' performance (KPI Awards, incentives)	THA	
5	Urban	Legislation (Review and strengthen) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability framework • Clear roles & responsibility • Coordination mechanism • Resource allocation mechanisms 		To address- Governance, co-ordination & partnership: mixed system
6		Equity promoting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerability index and assessment • Strategic purchase of essential service package • Blended service delivery model within ESP 		Equity: variation of disadvantaged population in urban settings
7		Structured urban PHC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining population, doctors, diagnostic, quality package • Information systems • Normative guidelines • Community engagement and empowerment • Public health surveillance (PHS) integration 		Structured and strengthened PHC
8	Quality	'Culture of change' Short term:	Gov MOH, MOF, local gov NGO Private, International agencies	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing HR, technology, infrastructure, strategic purchasing, procurement agencies 	Kerala TN	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality standard and strategy 	INDIA NQAS Thailand (HA) – twining	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality campaigns 	SRL Quality Champion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early from pre-services training • Trust from community
9.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term: Policy Changes – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ regulatory/accreditation system (with focus on private) 		

Annexure – 1: Agenda

Meeting of the SEAR PHC Forum – Thematic Working Groups
Dhaka, Bangladesh
20 – 22 June 2023

Venue: Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel (Lohori Hall)

Virtual Meeting Link

Join Zoom Meeting >

<https://who.zoom.us/j/92133115855>

Meeting ID: 921 3311 5855

Passcode: Searo@123

June 20, 2023

Time	Topic	Speaker
8:00 – 9:00	Registration	Master of Ceremonies: Dr. Suresh Adithyan, WHO SEARO; Ms. Krithika Murali, JHPIEGO
9:00 – 9:20	Opening Address <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening Remarks on behalf of the Regional Director, WHO SEARO Welcome Remarks from Host Government (Chief Guest) 	Dr Bardan Jung Rana WHO Representative, Bangladesh Dr Md. Anwar Hossain Howlader Secretary, Health Services Division, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Bangladesh
9:20 – 9:30	Group Photograph	
9:30 – 9:40	Setting the context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductions of Participants Objectives, and expectations of the Regional Workshop Administrative Announcements 	Dr Thaksaphon Thamarangsi, WHO SEARO

Time	Topic	Speaker
9:40 –10:30	Member State & Partner Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Perspective • Member State Updates • Partner Updates 	Moderator: Mr Ibadat Dhillon, WHOSEARO Mr. Gerard Schmets, Deputy Director, PHC Special Programme WHO
10.30-10.45	Healthy Break	
10:45 – 12:30	Thematic Working Groups: Break out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHC Workforce • PHC Quality (Medical Products) 	Moderators: Dr GSP Ranasinghe, MoH Sri Lanka and DrS Kumar, JHPIEGO Dr S Sridharan, MoH Sri Lanka andDr. S Mahajan, PATH
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 – 15:30	Thematic Working Groups: Break out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban PHC • Community Engagement 	Moderators: Dr S Vimal MOHFW, India, Dr A Jain,USAID, Dr. S Mahajan, Path Intl Dr Tahmina Sultana, MOHFW Bangladesh and Dr. T Sundararaman
15:30 –15:45	Healthy Break	
15:45 – 16:55	Thematic Working Groups: Plenary Presentation – HRH/Quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inputs, discussion • Potential areas for join action 	Moderator: Mr Ibadat Dhillon, WHO SEARO
16.55 –17.00	Wrap Up of Day 1	Dr Thaksaphon Thamarangsi WHO SEARO

June 21, 2023

Time	Topic	Speaker
8:00 – 9:00	Optional: Indonesia National Launch of Primary Healthcare Integration, Seminar Series(Livestream)	
9:00 – 9:05	Recap of Day 1	Dr Thaksaphon Thamarangsi WHO SEARO
9:05 – 10:05	Thematic Working Groups: Plenary Presentations – Urban/Community Inputs, discussion Potential area for join action	Moderator: Dr. Liaquat Ali, Pothikrit Institute of Health Studies, Bangladesh
10:05 – 11:00	Thematic Working Group, Service Delivery: Standards/Standardization Landscape analysis Indonesia National PHC Integration Presentation	Moderator: Dr A Jain, USAID Presentation: Dr A. Mehta, PHFI Presentation: Dr F. Syarifah, MoHIndonesia
11:00 – 11:10	Healthy Break	
11:10 – 13:00	Thematic Working Group PHC Monitoring Presentation Inputs, discussion, area for action	Moderators: Mr T Wangdi, MOH Bhutan, Dr. M Khatiwada, UNICEF ROSA, Dr. T Thamarangsi, WHO SEARO Presentation: Ms. M Sharma, IQVIA and Mr. I Dhillon, WHO SEARO
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 15:15	Thematic Working Group: PHC Investment Case Presentation Inputs, Discussion	Moderators: Dr O Tawaytibhongs MOPH, Thailand and Dr. M Chokshi, ACCESS Health
15:15 – 15:30	Healthy Break	
15:30 – 16:45	TWGs to SEAR PHC Forum Governance Member State and Partner Reflections, Joint Activities & Opportunities Priority Actions; Preparation for Annual Meeting	Dr Thaksaphon Thamarangsi, WHO SEARO
16:45 – 17:30	Bilateral Meetings	

June 22, 2023

SEAR PHC Forum: Learning from Bangladesh

Time	Event	Speaker
9:00 – 9:15	Recap of First Two Days. Objective and Expectations of Day 3	Dr Thaksaphon Thamarangsi, WHOSEARO
9:15 – 10:15	Bangladesh Community Clinic – Documentary /A Virtual Introduction of CC	DGHS, MOHFW, Bangladesh
10:15 – 10:30	Presentation on PHC in Bangladesh <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Progress, Innovations, Future Directions	Prof. Dr Ahmedul Kabir, ADG (Planning & Development)- DGHS, MOHFW, Bangladesh
10:30 – 10:45	Healthy Break	
10:45 – 12:30	Addressing PHC-related Operational Bottlenecks (Translating regional learning in Bangladesh context) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Break out Working Groups on areas of priority (ie HRH, Quality, Urban)	Moderator: Ms. Sangay Wangmo, WHO-Bangladesh
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 – 14:15	SEAR PHC Forum Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Potential areas of action/synergy Q and A	Moderator: Dr Thaksaphon Thamarangsi, WHO SEARO Presenter from SEAR PHC Forum
14:15 – 14:45	Reflection on Synthesis and Way forward <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy Options• Operational Learning	Prof. Dr. Abul Bashar Mahammad Khurshid Alam, Director General, DGHS, MOHFW, Bangladesh
14:45 – 15:00	Vote of thanks	Dr. Thaksaphon Thamarangsi, WHOSEARO

Annexure – 2: List of Participants

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Annexure – 3

Regional Director's message to the Meeting of the South-East Asia Regional PHC Forum – Thematic Working Groups, Dhaka, Bangladesh, June 20 to 22, 2023

Distinguished Member State representatives, senior advisors, partners, experts and colleagues,

Although our Regional Director, Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, would have very much liked to attend this important meeting, she is unable to due to prior commitments. It is therefore my pleasure to deliver this message on her behalf.

Quote:

Good morning and welcome to this Meeting of the South-East Asia Regional PHC Forum – Thematic Working Groups.

My sincere gratitude to the Government of Bangladesh for welcoming us, as well as allowing us to learn from Bangladesh's experience and future plans to drive Primary Health Care in the country. We especially look forward to together learning more about Bangladesh's successful community clinic model as recently featured in a UN General Assembly Resolution, with 14,000 clinics in operation across the country: promoting our Region-wide culture of shared learning, synergy and action.

And my personal thanks to all present – Member State representatives, partners and experts – for sharing your valuable time and expertise towards advancing our collective vision.

Almost two years ago, amid the COVID-19 response, Ministers' of Health in the Region unanimously adopted the Declaration on COVID-19 and Measures to Build Back Better where they highlighted a once-in-a-century opportunity and imperative to enable PHC-oriented health system transformation.

Today, I am very pleased to see that all countries in our South-East Asia Region followed political commitment with action.

The examples are many: Bhutan undergoing significant PHC-focused health system transformation; Maldives revitalizing PHC, including its' pilot in Faafu Atoll; Sri Lanka strengthening PHC in a context of significant economic uncertainty; Thailand expanding its' successful PHC system to the urban context.

Moreover, very shortly, Indonesia will initiate scale-up phase in the implementation of integrated primary health care across the country which is expected to provide high quality primary care services to 270 million Indonesians through standardization of 300,000 service providers, with 100% regular monitoring of area and population health outcomes.

Last - but certainly not least - one month ago, here in Dhaka, Her Excellency Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed her personal commitment to ensuring high-quality primary health care for all; with ongoing effort to development associated operationalize plans.


Ladies and gentleman, Health for All has long been an aspiration for countries of the South-East Asia Region. Never, has it its realization been closer in grasp.

A remarkable transformation is taking place across countries of our Region: a transformation from a focus on diseases to that of the full human condition. In the words of one of WHO's founders, Dr. Karl Evang a focus on "the human being – the working, creating, hoping and struggling human being".

Each of you in this room, and those joining virtually, are critical to this transformation.

Over the next three days you will together:

First, share, discuss and gather operational learning from across the Region on seven thematic areas that Member States identified as priority during last years' Regional PHC Workshop in Bangkok, Thailand.



Second, identify opportunity for greater synergy and joint activity in support of Member State priorities. I would like to emphasize that the gathering of operational learning through the thematic working groups is simply the means. The end is greater collaboration across SEAR PHC Forum participants; with coordination support to the translation of high-impact scalable solutions, based upon country demand. I am pleased to see that such processes have already started.

Third, in the specific context of Bangladesh and priority of advancing PHC, to demonstrate the synergizing effort of the SEAR PHC Forum.

Ladies and gentlemen, together we can and must grasp this once-in-a-century opportunity to accelerate PHC transformation across our Region.

I would like to close by re-stating my remarks at the launch of the SEAR PHC Forum:

“No more can there be ships in the dark, moving roughly together, but never quite reaching port. Our objectives are simply too important, our responsibilities too great.”.

I once again thank the Government of Bangladesh and wish you successful deliberations to support reorientation of health systems towards quality, accessible, affordable and comprehensive primary health care, to achieve universal health coverage, health security and Health for All.

Unquote.

I echo that sentiment and look forward to coming discussions.

Thank you.

