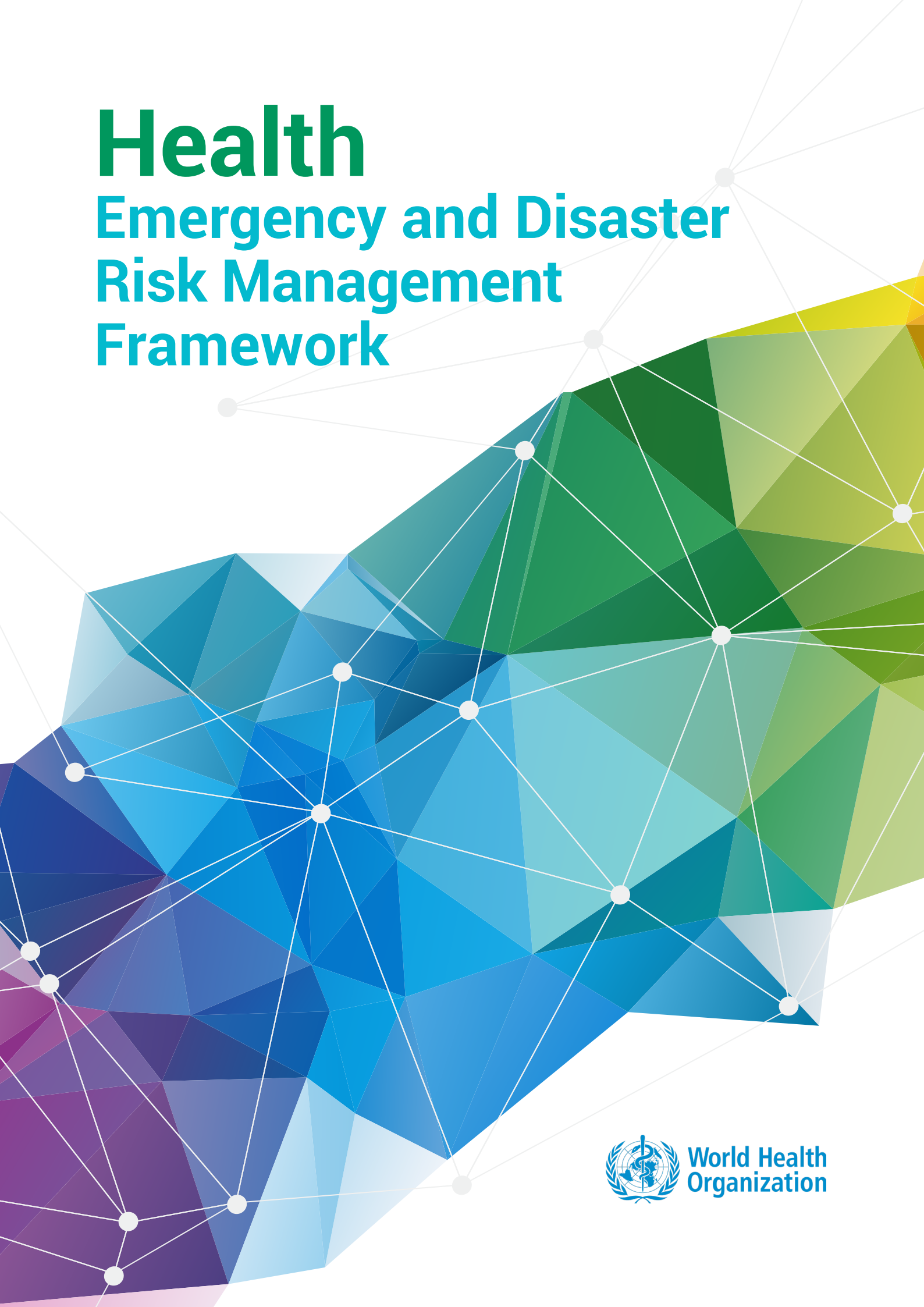
Health

Emergency and Disaster Risk Management Framework



World Health Organization

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FOREWORD

Emergencies and disasters take a profound toll on people's health, often well after the headlines fade.

Every year, over 170 million people will be affected by conflict, and another 190 million by disasters; yet the full impact on people's health is far greater than this. Some will be large national, regional or even global crises, from cyclones and drought to major outbreaks. Others will be more localized, like traffic collisions and fires, but can still be devastating in their collective costs to human life.

Too often these events set back development – sometimes for decades – and jeopardize universal health coverage along with other development agendas of a country. They shatter the aspirations of children and adults, and the communities they live in or call home. They can overwhelm health systems and decimate the economies that fund them.

Reducing these impacts is one of our most pressing priorities. It will be central to achieving the triple billion goals of the World Health Organization (WHO): for universal health coverage, for health security, and health for all.

This Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management (EDRM) Framework is a substantial response to this challenge. It emphasizes the critical importance of prevention, preparedness and readiness, together with response and recovery, to save lives and protect health. It outlines the need to work together – because EDRM is never the work of one sector or agency alone. It shows how the whole health system can and must be fundamental in all of these efforts.

The Framework also details the clear need for communities to be in the driving seat. While emergencies affect everyone, they disproportionately affect those who are the most vulnerable. The needs and rights of the poorest, as well as women, children, people with disabilities, older persons, migrants, refugees and displaced persons, and people with chronic diseases must be at the centre of our work.

WHO is fully committed to working with Member States and partners to ensure that the Framework is implemented effectively.

This document is the result of extensive consultations and inputs from Member States and partners, as well as WHO colleagues across offices and programmes around the world. I would like to thank each and every one of those who have contributed to its development.

Moreover, I encourage everyone to use this Framework: you should be able to see yourself and your role in these pages. Not all emergencies can be predicted, but they can be prepared for. Let us act together to reduce the risks they pose before, during and after emergencies, and achieve a safer, healthier world for all.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General
World Health Organization

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Health EDRM Framework is the culmination of a process of face-to-face and virtual consultations among WHO and experts from Member States and partner organizations who have contributed to the development, review and revision of the document. It is derived from the good practices and achievements in many related fields such as humanitarian action, multisectoral disaster risk management, and all-hazards emergency preparedness and response, including for epidemics, health systems strengthening and community-centred primary health care. The Framework has drawn inspiration from World Health Assembly and regional committee resolutions, regional strategies, national policies, international and national standards and guidelines, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, guidance on implementing the International Health Regulations (2005), and activities of the WHO Thematic Platform for Health EDRM and its associated Research Network.

The extensive process of developing this document was based on the evidence gained from WHO's work with partners and countries led by WHO country and regional offices and their respective Regional Emergency Directors: Ibrahima Socé Fall (African Region), Ciro Ugarte (Region of the Americas), Roderico Ofrin (South-East Asia Region), Nedret Emiroglu (European Region), Michel Thieren (Eastern Mediterranean Region), and Li Ailan (Western Pacific Region).

The Health EDRM Framework was reviewed and finalized at a Technical Workshop on Concepts and Technical Guidance for Health EDRM (Geneva, 21–23 November 2018) with participation from countries, WHO leadership at all levels and experts, including from academia. The leadership of Mike Ryan, Jaouad Mahjour, Stella Chungong and Qudsia Huda at WHO headquarters were very instrumental in finalizing the Framework. The contributions of Rick Brennan and Rudi Coninx, and Jonathan Abrahams who coordinated the development process, are gratefully acknowledged.

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