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Foreword



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The International Health Regulations (IHR) Coordination faced many daunting challenges in 2008. Following the entry into force of the revised Regulations in June 2007 the clock started running, with the deadline for all the World Health Organization (WHO) Member States to reach their core capacity requirements under these Regulations only five years away. This deadline gets closer each day, and at the time of writing, countries have only four years to meet the requirements.

By adopting the IHR, Member States have pledged to do all they can to put in place the minimum measures set out in the Regulations to “prevent, protect against, control and provide a public health response to the international spread of disease in ways that are commensurate with and restricted to public health risks, and which avoid unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade”.¹ And WHO’s obligation is to provide the technical support and guidance countries need so that they can fulfil their obligations.

Throughout 2008, the WHO Lyon Office (LYO) scaled up its efforts and activities to inform, support and guide countries to deepen their knowledge of the IHR through workshops and online trainings. It also increased its technical support to WHO regional offices to strengthen countries’ capacity for early warning, surveillance and response to public health events of potential international concern.

Recognising the vastness and intersectoral nature of IHR challenges, which now include emergencies caused by chemicals and other environmental hazards and outbreaks of foodborne diseases the Health Security and Environment cluster includes the department of Global Alert and Response, the department of Public Health and Environment, the department of Food Safety, Zoonoses and Foodborne Diseases and two special programmes for Global Influenza and Polio Eradication.

This report describes the main highlights of the activities carried out by the WHO Lyon Office over the past year in collaboration with WHO regional offices to assist countries to meet their obligations as we race towards our next milestone in June 2012.

¹ International Health Regulations (2005), Second edition, World Health Organization, Geneva, 2008.

International Health Regulations implementation: Meeting the timeline challenge

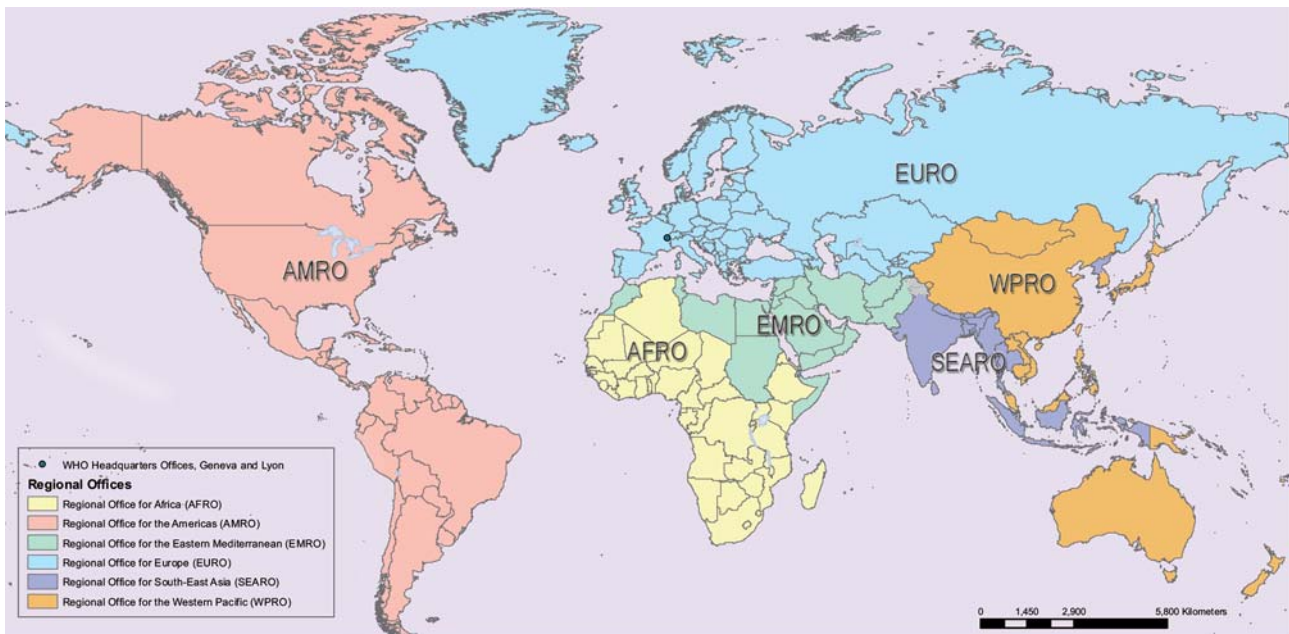
*“To achieve great things, two things are needed:
a plan, and not quite enough time”.*

Leonard Bernstein



Since its inception, the specific role of the WHO Lyon Office (LYO) has been to support the six WHO regional offices in strengthening their national public health capacities in countries. Given the expertise and extensive experience of LYO in this domain, the overarching objective of the Office is therefore to dedicate all its resources to facilitate IHR implementation in countries through its support to WHO regional and national offices, and play a global technical coordination role.

Regional offices of the World Health Organization



June 2007 marked the official entry into force of the revised Regulations. Prior to this date, some countries had already begun to assess their national capacities against the IHR requirements. However the deadline for all Member States to have assessed their core national capacities and develop their national action plans lay on the horizon: June 2009.

The main challenges for LYO in 2008 – and that will continue through June 2009 – were therefore to keep the momentum going in countries and continue to strengthen human resource capacity for the IHR through comprehensive human resources development packages disseminated on a global level.

Do you know your IHRs?

Test your knowledge as if you were a National IHR Focal Point:

Take the IHR Express Test

Contact: ihrinfo@who.int

Statement 1 – TRUE or FALSE?

The revised International Health Regulations (IHR) apply only to communicable diseases.

Statement 2 – TRUE or FALSE?

All cases of cholera, yellow fever and plague must systematically be notified to WHO under these IHR.

Statement 3 – TRUE or FALSE?

States Parties have the authority to determine that an event is a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC).



States Parties do not have the authority to determine that an event is a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC).
States Parties have the obligation to notify events to WHO under the IHR. Notifications are based on a prior assessment by the National IHR Focal Point using the decision instrument as defined in Annex 2 of the IHR. Only the Director-General of WHO has the authority to determine whether a particular event actually constitutes a PHEIC.
For more information: <http://www.who.int/csr/ihr/WHA58-en.pdf>
IHR-Article 1, Article 4, Article 6, Article 12, Annex 2.

The answer is: **False**
Statement 3

of the four criteria for notification in the decision instrument.
For more information: <http://www.who.int/csr/ihr/WHA58-en.pdf>
IHR – Article 6; Annex 2

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