

ACTIVITY REPORT 2007



**WHO Office for National Epidemic
Preparedness and Response, Lyon, France**

**International Health Regulations
Coordination Programme**

**Department of Epidemic and Pandemic
Alert and Response**



**World Health
Organization**

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Introduction



The year 2007 brought new leadership to the World Health Organization (WHO) as Dr Margaret Chan took office on 9 November 2006 following the untimely death of Director-General Dr Lee Jong-wook. Newly-appointed Director-General Margaret Chan stressed the complexity of public health challenges in today's mobile, interdependent and interconnected world, and pledged her commitment to improve health for people around the world — especially the people of Africa and women — two particularly vulnerable groups. Dr Chan identified six core issues that must be addressed to attain results for health: health development, security, capacity, information and knowledge, partnership, and performance.

This year was also marked by the entry into force of the revised International Health Regulations (IHR). The IHR lay out clear and tested rules for reporting disease outbreaks and public health events to WHO, and triggering response systems to isolate and contain threats. WHO Member States have now committed to collectively apply these rules for preventing and managing health risks.

Since the inception of the WHO Lyon Office (LYO) in 2001, its mission has been to assist countries to strengthen their national surveillance and laboratory systems. Nevertheless, the work of LYO — now part of the IHR Coordination Programme — has come into the forefront with the entry into force of the Regulations, as the activities developed and coordinated by the Office directly support countries to meet the new requirements of the revised IHR to better detect, assess, notify events and respond to public health emergencies of international concern.

Finally, the year closed with the creation of a new WHO cluster, Health Security and Environment. Formerly known as the Communicable Diseases cluster, Health Security and Environment includes the department of Epidemic and Pandemic Alert and Response with the addition of the Cholera team and the team on Disease Control in Humanitarian Emergencies, the department of Protection of the Human Environment and the department of Food Safety, Zoonoses and Foodborne Diseases and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. The changes within this cluster reflect the expanded scope of the IHR, which include emergencies caused by chemicals and other environmental hazards and outbreaks of foodborne disease.

Summary of activities in 2007: IHR implementation in countries

The LYO mission is to coordinate and support WHO's efforts in the Regions to strengthen national surveillance and laboratory systems in order that all countries can "detect, assess, notify and report events"* that may constitute a public health emergency of international concern.

**Article 5, International Health Regulations, World Health Organization, Geneva, 2005.*

The new responsibilities conferred on LYO to support implementation of the IHR in countries build on the work carried out in the office during the first six years of its existence: support to strengthening national public health security. This is in line with the core areas of WHO's work highlighted by WHO Director-General Dr Chan in the 2007 World Health Report *A Safer Future: Global Public Health Security in the 21st Century*. Dr Chan stresses that "international public health security is both a collective aspiration and a mutual responsibility" and that, while the IHR can work, its success depends on a unique global partnership among all stakeholders in countries and in WHO. As described below, fostering this unique global partnership is an ongoing activity that underpins all technical activities of LYO.

In 2007 the IHR Coordination Programme developed a roadmap to guide implementation of the IHR based on seven areas of work:

1. *Fostering global partnerships*
2. *Strengthening national disease prevention, surveillance, control and response systems*
3. *Strengthening public health security in travel and transport*
4. *Strengthening WHO global alert and response systems*
5. *Strengthening the management of specific risks*
6. *Sustaining rights, obligations and procedures*
7. *Conducting studies and monitoring progress*

These areas of work provide the framework for countries and relevant institutions and stakeholders to build their IHR "plans of action" to meet core capacity requirements.

LYO is mainly involved in the first three areas of work: building partnerships with all stakeholders, supporting countries to strengthen their national capacities for disease surveillance, control and response, and providing guidance on fulfilling IHR requirements in the travel and transport sectors. The fourth and fifth areas of work are coordinated by the Department of Epidemic and Pandemic Alert and Response and involve other WHO technical departments such as the Cholera team and the team on Disease Control in Humanitarian Emergencies,

Examples of WHO partners to support IHR implementation for capacity strengthening

- Other intergovernmental organizations: UN system and regional organizations
- International aid agencies
- WHO Collaborating Centres / networks of excellence
- Academics and professional associations
- Industry associations
- Nongovernmental organizations and foundations

the department of Protection of the Human Environment, the department of Food Safety, Zoonoses and Foodborne Diseases, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative and many other communicable disease programmes. The sixth area of work refers to all legal aspects of the IHR, and the seventh entails the identification of indicators and other tools to measure progress on IHR implementation.

Technical activities in LYO:

■ **Laboratory quality systems:** strengthen laboratory diagnostic capacity through various awareness, guidance, assessment and training activities, i.e. the development of quality management and external quality assessment programmes, the establishment of a twinning programme between resource limited laboratories and specialized institutions and the development of laboratory training packages.

■ **Disease surveillance systems:** support for IHR implementation through technical assistance on early warning, surveillance and response.

■ **Travel and transport - Points of entry:** support countries to meet IHR requirements at all points of entry (ports, airports and ground crossings) by developing standard operating procedures in collaboration with other specialized UN agencies including IMO, ICAO, UNWTO and industry associations including IATA, ACI, ISF, UIR¹.

The travel and transport project is new for LYO and an expert in this sector was recruited in 2007 to coordinate and lead activities in this area.

The above activities are carried out in all WHO Regions and in most countries in partnership with the WHO Regional Offices, and relevant technical departments in Geneva.

In addition to the technical teams, a specific Communications and IHR informa-

tion group is the WHO hub for promoting, raising awareness and improving understanding of the IHR globally and in countries. It is also in charge of communications for LYO. This is provided through developing and disseminating advocacy and strategic documents for internal and external audiences and developing initiatives with local and regional partners to increase visibility among the local and regional communities.

A description of each project area and activities is provided below.

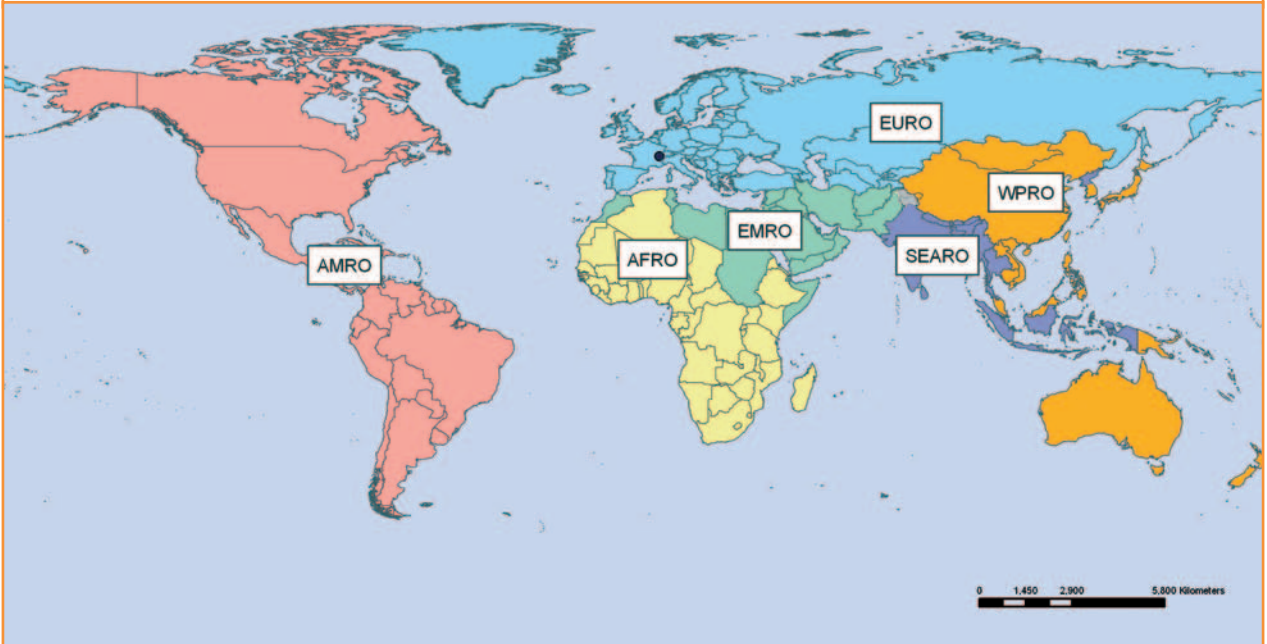
IHR implementation

The activities carried out by LYO provide the support that countries need to meet the new IHR requirements. Building on experience gained since the creation of the Office in 2001, LYO develops, coordinates and participates in a number of IHR implementation activities in close collaboration with the WHO Regional Offices and technical departments in Geneva. In 2007, LYO initiated and participated in projects in over 100 countries.

¹The complete list of travel and transport partners is provided in the section on Travel and transport - Points of entry.

World Health Organization

193 Member States, 6 Regional Offices and 147 Country Offices



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- WHO Headquarters, Geneva and Lyon
- AFRO** Regional Office for Africa
- AMRO** Regional Office for the Americas/Pan American Health Organization
- EMRO** Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
- EURO** Regional Office for Europe
- SEARO** Regional Office for South-East Asia
- WPRO** Regional Office for the Western Pacific

Pop quiz: Do you know your IHR?

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