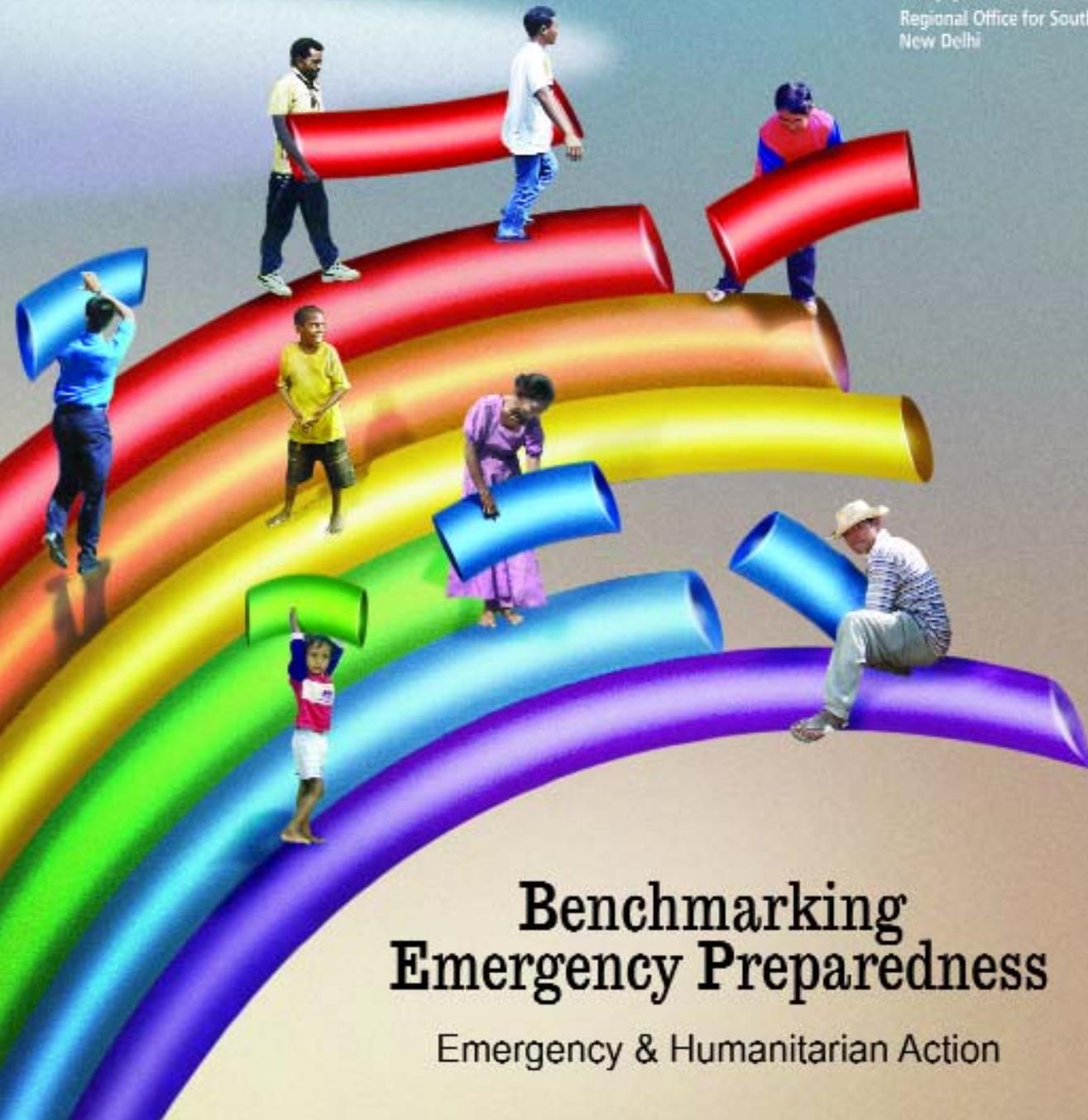




World Health
Organization

Regional Office for South-East Asia
New Delhi



Benchmarking Emergency Preparedness

Emergency & Humanitarian Action



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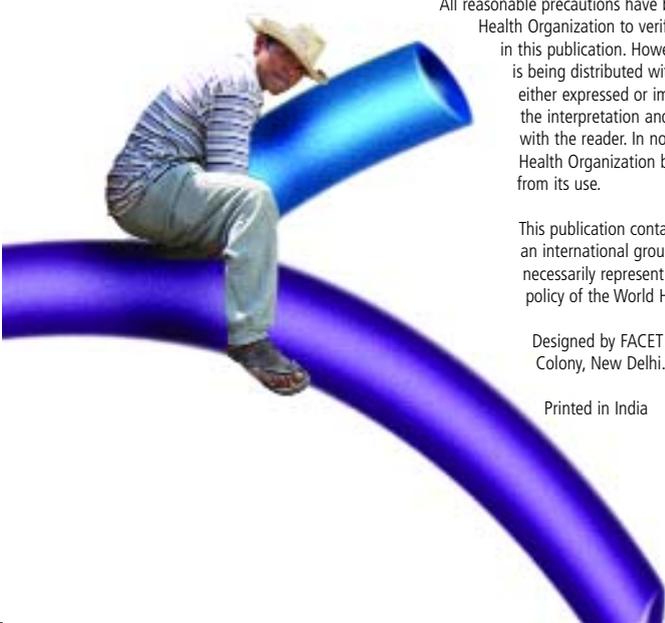
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**The benchmarks
are an
expression of the
consensus and
commitment of
the countries.**

WHAT ARE **benchmarks**

- Benchmarking is a strategic process often used by businesses to evaluate and measure performance in relation to the best practices of their sector. The Emergency and Humanitarian Action Programme (EHA) of the WHO South-East Asia Regional Office (SEARO) and its partners have applied the process of setting benchmarks as a tool to increase performance in emergency preparedness and response.
- The SEARO Benchmarks Framework consists of 12 benchmarks, developed through a participatory process that involved all 11 member countries. Each benchmark has a corresponding set of standards and indicators that further elaborates the best practices of the specific benchmark.
- The benchmarks are broad in nature as they reflect the consensus of all 11 countries on the desired performance for improving emergency preparedness and response. The 12 benchmarks fall into the categories of: 1) human resource development, training and education; 2) planning; 3) legislation and policy; 4) funding; 5) vulnerability assessment; 6) information systems; 7) surveillance; 8) absorbing and buffering capacities and responses; 9) patient care; and 10) coordination.
- The benchmarks integrate multisectoral concerns at community, sub-national and national levels. This means that if all benchmarks are achieved, the level of preparedness of the country will be extremely high and intersectoral linkages and wide participation by all stakeholders ensured.

The *World Disaster Report 2006* highlighted the discouraging fact that around 58% of the total number of people killed in natural disasters during the decade 1996-2005 was from SEAR countries. In 2005, three countries of the SEA Region (India, Bangladesh and Indonesia) were among the top-10 countries most affected by natural disasters.



WHY benchmarks ?

- The Benchmarks Framework is a response to the collective experiences of five SEAR countries during the earthquake and tsunami of 26 December 2004, the recurring emergencies in all SEAR Member countries and the global call for improved emergency preparedness.
- The benchmarks facilitate political commitment through a uniform framework for planning and evaluating emergency preparedness actions across countries to which all countries are committed.
- The benchmarks were formulated to set standards for emergency preparedness through a participatory approach and to be applicable to the specific situations in the countries of the Region.
- The Benchmarks Framework facilitates planning, monitoring and evaluation in a uniform manner across the 11 countries while allowing for country-specific approaches.



HOW WERE THE **benchmarks** DEVELOPED

- The benchmarks are the product of a regional consultation in Bangkok in November 2005. All 11 SEAR member countries were represented at the consultation. In addition to Ministries of Health (MOH), a number of other stakeholders were present, notably from Ministries of Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Education as well as UN agencies, International Federation of Red Cross, International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO), donors and universities.
- The consultation's main objective was to identify gaps in addressing response, preparedness and recovery for health needs of affected and vulnerable populations. The 12 benchmarks address the key issues necessary to establish a disaster preparedness mechanism as identified by the participants at the consultation.
- Following a regional consultation in Bali in June 2006, the Benchmarks Framework was further refined to include standards and indicators to make planning, monitoring and evaluation more accurate.



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