

Dr Samlee Plianbangchang, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia Region visited Myanmar

Dr Samlee Plianbangchang, Regional Director, SEARO visited Myanmar on 12 June 2008. He was warmly welcomed at the airport by H.E Professor Mya Oo, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and officials together with Professor Adik Wibowo, WHO Representative to Myanmar.

Dr Samlee Plianbangchang and Professor Adik Wibowo paid a courtesy call to H.E Professor Kyaw Myint, Minister, Ministry of Health at Yangon General Hospital meeting room and discussed matters related to Nargis relief activities and continued close collaboration between WHO and Ministry of Health.

Dr Samlee Plianbangchang and Professor Adik Wibowo also met Mr Bishow Parajuli, UN Resident Coordinator together with Mr. Daniel Baker, UN Humanitarian Coordinator, at UNDP office.

The Regional Director met with Nargis team members of WHO Country Office, Myanmar and discussed matters related to Nargis relief activities.

Dr Samlee Plianbangchang and Professor Adik Wibowo accompanied by H.E. Professor Mya Oo and officials from the Ministry of Health visited cyclone affected areas in Yangon Division.

The Emergency and Humanitarian Action Programme of the South East Asia Regional Office of WHO is committed to the organization-wide mission of increasing the capacity and self-reliance of countries in the prevention of disasters, preparation for emergencies, mitigation of their health consequences and the creation of a synergy



Dr Samlee Plianbangchang, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia Region and Professor Adik Wibowo, WHO Representative to Myanmar, meeting with H.E Professor Kyaw Myint, Minister, Ministry of Health.

between emergency action and sustainable development.

WHO is mandated by its Constitution (article 2) to: "furnish appropriate technical assistance and, in emergencies, the necessary aid upon the request or acceptance of Governments".

The mandate was further elaborated subsequently and WHO was asked "to support and enable national and international agencies working in the frontline of disasters and emergencies and in post-crisis rehabilitation to apply the best health practices in preparing for, assessing, implementing and evaluating the impact of humanitarian health assistance. In discharging this mission, WHO is dedicated to the fundamental principles of partnership, collaboration, and coordination". The recently developed WHO's core commitments in emergencies reconfirm these principles for action.

WHO has four core functions in emergencies:

- **Health assessment and tracking:** ensuring proper assessments are undertaken, assessing needs and priorities, surveillance and monitoring of the impact of humanitarian responses;

- **Coordinating health action:** convening different actors, exchanging information, ensuring coordination, agreeing strategies in response to assessments, joint and focused action;
- **Filling Gaps:** identifying gaps in the response that have a significant impact on survival rates and levels of ill-health, and ensuring they are filled, including restoring basic public health functions;
- **Strengthening local capacity:** training, rehabilitating essential structures, repairing and restarting broken systems, empowering critical professionals.

The Regional Director visited the University of Public Health, together with Prof Adik Wibowo and was met by H.E Professor Mya Oo, Deputy Minister, Dr. Tin Min, Ag Rector of the University of Public Health. Discussions were focused towards strengthening and development of the faculty members and for further upgrading the public health library. Dr. Tin Min, Ag Rector, University of Public Health briefly presented the relief activities implemented by faculty members and students from the University of Public Health in cyclone affected areas.

The Regional Director departed from Yangon on the morning of 14 June 2008 and was seen off at Yangon International Airport by Professor Adik Wibowo, H.E. Professor Mya Oo and officials from the Ministry of Health. ■



Dr Samlee Plianbangchang, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia Region and Professor Adik Wibowo, WHO Representative to Myanmar, meeting with H.E Professor Mya Oo, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and officials at University of Public Health, Yangon.

Visit of the Deputy Regional Director of WHO South-East Asia Regional Office to Yangon



Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Deputy Regional Director of SEARO visiting a relief camp in Yangon Division.

Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Deputy Regional Director of South-East Asia Regional Office and Dr Alessandro Loretto, Acting Director, Emergency Relief Operation, Health Action in Crisis, World

Health Organization Headquarters visited Yangon on May 30th 2008.

Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Deputy Regional Director, Professor Adik Wibowo, WHO Representative to Myanmar and Dr

Alessandro Loretto paid a courtesy call to H.E. Professor Mya Oo, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and discussed matters related to relief activities in disaster affected areas.

Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Professor Adik Wibowo and Dr Alessandro Loretto also met with Mr Daniel B Baker, UN Humanitarian Coordinator, at UNFPA office in Yangon.

Both of them participated in the video conference in which issues related to relief activities were coordinated between HQ, Regional office, WHO Country Offices of Myanmar and Thailand.

Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh and Dr Alessandro Loretto also met and discussed with the Nargis team members of WHO Myanmar Country Office.

The next day, Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Dr Alessandro Loretto together with Professor Adik Wibowo and WHO staff accompanied by officials from Ministry of Health visited a relief camp at North Dagon Township. They met with the people in the relief camp and donated essential medical supplies and medicines for the camp. ■

Behaviour change communication training for malaria prevention and control

Malaria Unit of WHO is working with the Myanmar Council of Churches for Malaria prevention and control with the support of Three Diseases Fund (3DF) for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria since 2005. The main aim of the project is to reduce malaria morbidity and mortality in the country. The objectives set for the projects are; to increase the awareness of the community on malaria prevention and treatment, to increase the access of these services in the project areas and to improve the capacity of the community members. Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC) is implementing "Community based malaria prevention and control project" in 8 townships at Sagaing Division, Chin State and Kachin State. Twenty villages in each townships with high malaria prevalence are included for the project implementation. One volunteer from each village had been recruited and trained to deliver preventive and curative services on malaria. They were provided with Rapid Diagnostic Tests, Coartem and IEC materials like posters, pamphlets, calendars and flip charts.

In June 2008, the volunteers and township activity managers were trained for Behaviour Change Communication in malaria

prevention and control by the joint effort of international and national consultants from WHO, malaria unit. Trainings took place in Kalay and Myitkyina. The training was organized with the active participation of the local volunteers so that they can learn the concepts of behaviour change communication and apply them in their communities. It will help in reaching

the local ethnic groups in Chin and Kachin State with key messages related to malaria prevention and control because the projects areas usually speak local ethnic languages. Behaviour changes related to malaria prevention and treatment will be enabled through the empowerment of volunteers trained on Behaviour Change Communication (BCC). ■



Behaviour change communication training at Myitkyina for the malaria volunteers of community bases malaria prevention and control project, MCC.

Tracing missing Tuberculosis patients after Cyclone Nargis

In support to the health authorities of the affected townships in adapting, developing and implementing strategic approaches for Tuberculosis (TB) control in affected areas, WHO and Ministry of Health launched first Mobile Health Teams to the Nargis Cyclone affected townships, Ngaputaw, Bogole and Labutta in Ayeyarwaddy Division during the period 11 to 18 June 2008.

The mission composed of 3 main teams, one team to each township and then each team divided to 2 sub teams with the following objectives:

1. To trace TB and leprosy patients missing since Cyclone Nargis for continued treatment
2. To provide:
 - Curative services
 - Public Health Activities (immunization, health education, water and sanitation).

WHY the TB mission at this time?

1. The WHO TB unit is concerned by the potential consequences of the cyclone on TB transmission, disease development and potential drug resistant development.
2. Many TB patients may be unable to be located and thus remain untreated.
3. In turn, many TB suspects may not be investigated and could continue to infect others.
4. 2 weeks left for those who are interrupted their treatment to become defaulter according to WHO definition of defaulter (interruption for more than 2 months)

Strategic approach to trace TB patients:

1. Collect all relevant information of the TB patients from the TB register at township level

2. Map the missing patients (village, contact address).
3. Information of the missing TB patients provided to Basic Health Staff (BHS) working at the camp to cross check the names with the camp register.
4. Following mapping of the missing patients, the Mobile Teams to visit the affected villages where the missing TB patients are registered

Findings and achievements:

- The mission managed to reach hard to reach areas in the 3 townships
- In addition to tracing the TB and leprosy patients they provided health care services, immunization, antenatal care, IEC and other public health measures (water, sanitation and hygiene) to the villagers in the affected areas
- The Basic Health Staff are very committed dedicated working in very difficult circumstances to provide health care and services.
- Most of the health infrastructure are affected to certain degrees (from minor to complete damage)



WHO officials visiting a clinic at one of the relief camps in Labutta to trace missing TB patients and to advocate early detection of suspects presenting with chest symptoms.

A follow-up plan of action with the following objectives will be implemented:

1. Provide continued treatment to TB patients having interrupted their treatment
2. Intensified case finding of infectious TB patients in the resettlement villages and camps
3. Restore TB control in the affected areas to a level better than before Nargis. ■

Status of missed TB patients after Nargis in Labutta, Bogale and Ngaputaw townships

Patients	Labutta	Bogale	Ngaputaw	Total
TB patients on treatment before Nargis	245	280	198	723
TB patient on treatment after Nargis	145	242	174	561
Missed TB patients	100	38	24	162
Investigated patients	73	33	22	128
Traced on treatment	27	16	13	56
Refused to continue	0	0	3	3
Traveled to another townships	3	4	1	8
Not detected due to wrong address	2	4	0	6
Still under investigation	15	5	2	17
Died (total)	41	9	5	54
• Before Nargis	6	2	5	13
• During Nargis	34	7	0	41
• After Nargis	1	0	0	1
No information	12	0	0	12

World No-Tobacco Day 2008

The Ministry of Health, Myanmar, in close collaboration with WHO, organized the official commemoration ceremony of the World No-Tobacco Day, 2008 at the conference hall of the Ministry of Health, Nay Pyi Taw on 28 June 2008. Although the actual date for the World No-Tobacco Day fell on 31 May 2008, the official commemoration was delayed for four weeks due to overwhelming responsibilities and activities for Nargis cyclone relief efforts being carried out by both the Ministry of Health and WHO country office in Myanmar.

The ceremony was attended by the H.E. Minister for Health, Prof. Kyaw Myint, H.E. Deputy Minister for Health, Prof. Paing Soe, senior officials from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Sports and other ministries, representatives from the Myanmar Women Affairs Federation, Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association and other non-governmental organizations, students and youth representatives.

First, Prof Kyaw Myint, H.E. the Minister gave a speech highlighting the importance of tobacco control programmes particularly focusing the youth and students and activities carried out by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with WHO through partnership with other ministries and agencies. Later, Prof Adik Wibowo, WHO Representative to Myanmar, read out the message from Dr Samlee Plianbangchang, the Regional Director for WHO South East Asia Region. Then, prizes were distributed by the dignitaries to the students who won the essay competition on Tobacco Free Youth, the theme for this year's World No-Tobacco Day. ■



World Health
Organization

Commemoration ceremony for World Health Day 2008:

"Protecting health from climate change"



HE Professor Kyaw Myint, Minister for Health, Ministry of Health delivers a speech at the World Health Day 2008 commemoration ceremony at Nay Pyi Taw.

The official commemoration ceremony for World Health Day 2008 was organized by the Ministry of Health, Union of Myanmar, in collaboration with the WHO country office in Myanmar, in the meeting room of the Ministry of Health at Nay Pyi Taw, on 7 April 2008 in the morning. The ceremony was addressed by the Minister for Health, H.E. Professor Kyaw Myint. Also present at the occasion were the Deputy Ministers, Directors General, Deputy Directors General and officials of the Ministry of Health, representatives of local NGOs, and staff from health related departments and local press. H.E. Professor Kyaw Myint, Minister of Health delivered a speech and Acting WHO Representative to Myanmar, Dr Hans Kluge read out the message of the Regional Director of WHO South East Asia Region.

After the ceremony the guests were invited to view a mini exhibition "Protecting health from climate change", in which photos of activities of the Ministry of Health and also information, education and communication materials such as World Health Day magazines, posters and charts with health statistics were shown. The magazine and posters distributed to the guests at the ceremony featured the World Health Day Theme both in Myanmar and English languages. All the information materials highlighted the events and activities related to climate change and health. The Ministry of Health also produced a big banner depicting effects of climate change and erected at the entrance of the Ministry of Health in Nay Pyi Taw.

WHO Myanmar produced and distributed green color T-shirts, green advocacy bags, green note pads and key chains with World Health Day logo at the ceremony of World Health Day. A WHO fact sheet on "Protecting health from climate change" in English was especially produced along with the regular WHO Myanmar quarterly newsletter and distributed. The fact sheet also featured the World Health Day message from Dr Samlee Plianbangchang, Regional Director of WHO South East Asia Region. WHO Country Office also produced and displayed four banners in different colors featuring the World Health Day Theme and displayed at the ceremony.

After the opening ceremony, a technical seminar on the theme of the 2008 World Health Day was held at the same venue. It was chaired by Dr. Khin Maung Lwin, Director of Health Education Bureau, Ministry of Health. The seminar concluded with the draft recommendations for further consideration of future actions to address climate change.

There was good media coverage of World Health Day related events. The ceremonies conducted at the central level as well as State/Division level were featured on the official radio and TV channels. TV and radio discussions and talk shows on the World Health Day theme were also produced and telecasted. The official radio and TV channels aired the World Health Day theme in 8 different ethnic languages. Public announcements and articles were published in newspapers, journals and magazines. TV, radio and cinema announcements were also developed and inserted in the programmes. ■



WHO IEC materials displayed at the opening ceremony of World Health Day 2008 at Nay Pyi Taw.

Book Reviews

Monographs on natural disasters

Communicable diseases following natural disasters: risk assessment and priority interventions.

Geneva: World Health Organization: 2006. 19p.

Improved detection and response to communicable diseases is important in order to monitor the incidence of diseases, to document their impact and to help to better quantify the risk of outbreaks following natural disasters.



http://www.who.int/entity/diseasecontrol/emergencies/guidelines/CD_Disasters_26_06.pdf

Protecting New Health Facilities from Natural Disasters: Guidelines for the Promotion of Disaster Mitigation.

Washington, D.C.: Pan American Health Organization, 2003. 52p.

This publication is an overview of the Guidelines for Vulnerability Reduction in the Design of New Health Facilities and includes recommendations on how to promote their use among national authorities, planners and financing agencies involved in the development of these projects. It emphasizes the substantial social and economic benefits of applying disaster mitigation measures to the design, planning and construction of health facilities.



Older people in emergencies: considerations for action and policy development, by David Hutton.

Geneva: World Health Organization, 2008. 44p.

Natural disasters are on the increase worldwide. However the plight of older people is still largely neglected. More emergencies are taking place in rapidly ageing countries.



http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Hutton_report_small.pdf

1 August 2008	World Breastfeeding Week
28 September 2008	World Rabies Day
30 September 2008	World Heart Day