

## World Health Day 2013 in Nay Pyi Taw



*World Health Organization Acting Representative to Myanmar, Dr Krongthong Thimasarn reads out the message of the Regional Director of WHO SEAR at the World Health Day 2013 commemoration ceremony at Nay Pyi Taw.*

The official commemoration of World Health Day 2013 was held in the main conference hall of the Ministry of Health, Nay Pyi Taw on 7th April 2013. The ceremony was opened by H.E. Deputy Minister for Health, Dr Thein Thein Htay, who delivered an opening speech, and attended by Directors-General, Deputy Directors-General and officials from the Ministry of Health, and other ministries, representatives of various international organizations, United Nations Agencies, non-Governmental Organizations, local press and other invited guests.

H.E. Dr Thein Thein Htay, Deputy Minister of Health, delivered a speech and WHO Acting

Representative to Myanmar, Dr Krongthong Thimasarn read out the message of the Regional Director of WHO South East Asia Region.

The guests were then invited to view a mini exhibition "High Blood Pressure", in which photos of activities of the Ministry of Health and also information, education and communication materials such as World Health Day magazines, posters were shown. The information materials highlighted the events and activities related to cooperation of all stakeholders.

WHO Myanmar also participated in the mini exhibition, displaying t-shirts, key chain and red World Health Day advocacy bags with World Health Day logos, which were distributed at the ceremony on the morning of World Health Day at the meeting hall in Nay Pyi Taw. After the opening ceremony at Nay Pyi Taw a technical seminar on the theme of the 2013 World Health Day "High Blood Pressure" was held in the Ministry of Health meeting hall. A WHO fact sheet on "High Blood Pressure," 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 produced three banners with different photos taken by WHO Myanmar along with messages featuring the World Health Day Theme. These banners were displayed at the entrance of main venue of the World Health Day 2013 ceremony at Nay Pyi Taw. ■

## Training workshop on drug abuse prevention and treatment

Drug use among the youth living in Kachin, Shan North State and some areas was considered higher for being close to the border area with a neighboring country. It warrants close scrutiny for experimentation with new emerging drugs and new modes of administration. Emerging drugs abuse have the tendency to start at the border areas and after a few years it slowly spread to the major cities of the mainland areas such as Yangon, Mandalay and other major cities in Myanmar. Among the emerging drugs, the use of Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) has been recognized as an intensifying problem drug. As ATS abuse among clients has become an important issue, National Substance Abuse Control program with support from, HIV Unit, WHO country office conducted a training workshop on drug abuse prevention and treatment including Methadone therapy in May 2013. This training aimed to promote skills of Psychiatrists, Township Medical Officers and Non Governmental Organization staffs by increasing knowledge of



*Dr Hla Htay, Programme manager, National Drug Abuse Control Programme, facilitating at the training workshop on drug abuse prevention and treatment including Methadone therapy.*

Management for ATS abuse. It also aids the drug abuse prevention efforts before the practice spreads to the youths of the mainland cities. ■

## WHO Communication Training Workshops in Myanmar



**P**ublic Information and Advocacy Unit of WHO/SEARO, in collaboration with Documentation Unit, conducted Communication Workshop for spokespersons of WHO country office, Myanmar, on 14 May 2013 at Chatrium Hotel, Yangon. The workshop was attended by 25 staff members from WHO country office, Myanmar. It is a standard WHO communication training package and it has been organized by SEARO in eight countries of the Region. Ms Vismita Gupta-Smith, Public Information and Advocacy Officer, WHO/SEARO and Ms Jennie Greaney, Documentation Officer, WHO/SEARO conducted the workshop as resource persons. During the workshop, four main topics were covered namely basic tips for communications, effective writing skills, communicating public health risks and skills for dealing with media. Inter-active training methods were used including, presentation, questions and answers, group works, simulations, role play, etc. The programme was well received and benefits were appreciated by country office staff.

The team also organized communication training workshop for executive management, Ministry of Health at Aureum Palace Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw on 16 May 2013. At the inauguration session, Dr Soe Lwin Nyein, Deputy Director-General, Department of Health opened the workshop with an opening remark highlighting the importance of communication skills in public health, particularly the risk communication. He welcome WHO's initiative for capacity building of Ministry of Health staff in this important area. Later, Ms Vismita Gupta-Smith and Ms Jennie Greaney gave brief introductions on the background of the training workshop. Altogether 27 participants from various units of department of health attended the workshop. The same modules were used but while English was the main communicating medium for most of the sessions, local language was also used for a few sessions as appropriate. For example, discussions in local language during group works and using Myanmar language texts for posters were allowed. Interpretation/ translation service was provided as necessary. ■



### Book Reviews

**Pedestrian safety: a road safety manual for decision-makers and practitioners.** Geneva: World Health Organization, 2013. 114p.

This manual equips the reader with necessary information on: the magnitude of pedestrian death and injury; key risk factors; how to assess the pedestrian safety situation in a country or area and prepare an action plan; and how to select, design, implement and evaluate effective interventions. The manual stresses the importance of a comprehensive, holistic approach that includes enforcement, engineering and education. It also draws attention to the benefits of walking, which should be promoted as an important mode of transport given its potential to improve health and preserve the environment.

[http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/79753/1/9789241505352\\_eng.pdf](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/79753/1/9789241505352_eng.pdf)



## Workshop for formulation of action plan for community based epilepsy programme

**T**he workshop for formulation of action plan for community based epilepsy programme was conducted at the Park Royal Hotel, Yangon on 15 May 2013.

Epilepsy is one of the most common serious neurological disorders. Globally the prevalence of epilepsy is estimated to be about 5 to 8 per 1000 population. In developing countries, the prevalence reported to range from 10 per 1000 in South East Asia to 30 per 1000 reported from South America.

There are an estimated 15 million persons with epilepsy in the 11 Member Countries of SEAR. About 70-80% of these people live in rural areas where appropriate services for neuropsychiatric disorders are very limited. Despite the global advances in modern medicine, and the availability of phenobarbital since 1912, epilepsy continues to be surrounded by myths and misconceptions. It is not unusual for patients with epilepsy to be taken to faith healers rather than medical doctors. As per the Global Campaign against Epilepsy, 80-90% of people with epilepsy in developing countries are not properly treated.

The objectives of the above workshop were:

- To share experiences on the implementation of community based epilepsy project in 2005
- Based on the previous experiences in 2005, to develop a project proposal to be implemented in two pilot townships-with detail activities, time lines and costing-at township and central level
- Finalize the proposal with consensus from all stakeholders
- To bring essential treatment to 75% of persons living with epilepsy in project townships

The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Tarun Dua, Medical Officer, WHO HQ Geneva and Dr. Byung-In Lee, The International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE) and was attended by Professor Win Min Thit, Professor/Head, Department of Neurology, Yangon General Hospital/University of Medicine 1, Professor Nyan Tun, Professor/Head (retired) North Okklapa General Hospital/University of Medicine 2, Dr. Than Sein President of People's Health Foundation. Neurologists from Yangon General Hospital, North Okklapa General Hospital, Yangon Children's Hospital



Mandalay General Hospital, Township Medical Officers from Hlegu and Hmawbi Townships, Yangon Region, staff from WHO Country Office.

The conclusion and recommendations of the workshop were:

1. There is full commitment by all the participants of this meeting to implement community based epilepsy programme in Myanmar
2. To establish project coordination committee and technical working groups for training, situational analysis, advocacy, community awareness, supply of anti-epileptics, protocol model for epilepsy care and other health system issues such as referral, community based sustainable financing mechanism
3. Technical working groups to review and update/adapt technical documents from HQ and SEARO
4. A follow up workshop with technical working groups to formulate detail costed work plan for central and township level with detail financial costing and for goals and objectives
5. Utilize training materials and tools that have been already developed for the Nyaungdone project and adapt/update as necessary
6. To formulate/incorporate in the detail work plan for scaling up/replication to other additional townships
7. To complete Myanmar project planning document
8. To proceed with official project launching before the end of the year



World Health  
Organization

## World No-Tobacco Day 2013 commemorated

The Ministry of Health, Myanmar, in close collaboration with WHO, organized the official commemoration ceremony of the World No-Tobacco Day, 2013 at the conference hall of the Ministry of Health, Nay Pyi Taw on 31 May 2013. The ceremony was attended by the H.E. Deputy Minister for Health, Dr Win Myint, H.E. Deputy Minister for Commerce and Trade Dr Pwint Hsan, Members of National Tobacco Control Committee, Directors-General and senior officials from the Ministry of Health and other ministries, representatives from the Myanmar Women Affairs Federation, Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association and other non-governmental organizations.



*WHO Acting Representative to Myanmar, Dr Jigmi Singay reads out the message from the Regional Director of WHO South-East Asia Region for the World No-Tobacco Day 2013.*

First, Dr Win Myint, H.E. Deputy Minister gave a speech highlighting the progress of tobacco control programme in Myanmar being carried out by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with WHO. He mentioned some key facts and figures on tobacco epidemic and related morbidity and mortality due to use of tobacco. He gave special emphasis on the need to enforce comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, with both global and local examples. He also quoted the clear guidance made by the President of the Government of the Republic of Union of Myanmar for strictly prohibiting tobacco consumption in public areas, particularly at government office premises. He called for cooperation of various departments, non-governmental organizations in national tobacco control efforts.

Later, Dr Jigmi Singay, WHO Acting Representative to Myanmar, read out the message from Dr Samlee Plianbangchang, the Regional Director for WHO South East Asia Region on the occasion of World No Tobacco Day 2013. In the message, the Regional Director congratulated the governments of the Member States of the WHO South-East Asia Region for the progress made on tobacco control, quoting some recent success stories in the Regional Countries. On the other side, there is still a need to further strengthen national efforts as the tobacco industry is using various innovative ways for promoting sales of tobacco products, such as sponsorship of corporate social responsibility activities, rescue in natural disasters, sponsoring research grants, sports and social events, etc. he added. He has thus urged the Member States to fully implement the guidelines to comprehensively ban tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, as per provisions in the Article 13 of WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

After the ceremony, the dignitaries and invited guests viewed the mini-exhibition displayed by the Tobacco Free Initiative (TFI) Programme of the Ministry of Health featuring various tobacco control activities that took place in the recent years.

### important dates

28 July 2013	World Hepatitis Day
1 - 7 August 2013	World Breastfeeding Week
28 September 2013	World Rabies Day
29 September 2013	World Heart Day