

Speech of the WHO Representative, I.R.Iran on the occasion of World Asthma Day 2010:

Over the past 30 years, there has been a major shift in how emergencies and crises are managed. More emphasis used to be placed on humanitarian response and relief activities- national and international- with little attention given to strategies and actions in place prior to disasters that can mitigate the effects of these events on communities and preserve lives and assets. It is becoming increasingly clear that while humanitarian efforts remain important and need continued attention, community-based risk reduction and emergency preparedness programmes are critical for reducing the effects of emergencies, disasters and other crises, and thus essential for the attainment and protection of sustainable development.

Emergency preparedness has traditionally focused on stockpiling relief goods and providing urgent services to meet the public's basic needs. In most countries political commitment and financial and human resources are concentrated overwhelmingly on these short-term emergency contingencies. While building up capacities for human response continues to be a priority for all countries, it is now widely believed that more should be done to reduce the social, economic and human consequences of these emergencies. This translates into a need for placing much greater attention on the implementation of proactive strategies and a call for a more comprehensive approach to building national capacities in emergency preparedness and response as well as in risk reduction focusing on those communities most at risk.

Training and capacity building is one of the important aspects of emergency preparedness and response.

Islamic Republic of Iran is the most disaster-prone country in the world. Averages of 4,000 people were killed and 55,000 affected annually by natural disaster in the last decade. In addition all of the neighbor countries of Iran are high vulnerable to different types of natural and man-made disasters such as earthquake, flood, war, conflicts, etc.

Shortage of well-trained human resource is a main limitation of disaster management at all levels of policy-making, planning and field operation of health system.

In order to strengthen national training capacities in Disaster Preparedness and Management, WHO together with Tehran University of Medical Sciences developed a project with support of International Association of National Public Health Institute (IANPHI).

This project was focused on development of a training curriculum for disaster managers in Iran that was successfully delivered by two WHO consultants. The consultants assisted the MOHME and Tehran University in Iran in curriculum development for a training program in Disaster Management and Risk Reduction in Health System.

The overall objective of this program is to provide a venue for exchange of knowledge and insights and a means for fostering support for initiatives within the health sector of Iran to enhance capacity in disaster management.