

**Twenty-seventh
Meeting of Ministers of Health
Kathmandu, 7–8 September 2009**

*Kathmandu
Declaration*

**on Protecting Health Facilities
from Disasters**



**World Health
Organization**

Regional Office for South-East Asia

*W*e, the Health Ministers of Member States of the WHO South-East Asia Region participating in the Twenty-seventh Health Ministers' Meeting in Kathmandu, Nepal, appreciate the efforts being made by Member States and partners in the South East Asia Region to keep health facilities safe from emergencies and disasters. We also recognize that by optimizing the use of advances in technology and applying current good practices, stakeholders can scale up efforts to strengthen the structural, non-structural and functional aspects of protecting and increasing the resilience of health facilities;

Concerned that from 1998-2009, natural disasters killed over 750,000 people in the South-East Asia Region, which is 61.6 % of the world's total deaths from natural disasters;

Aware that climate change-related events can predispose to disasters which can have a detrimental effect on health facilities;

Also aware that health facilities, including staff, equipment and other related resources, can become casualties when they are most needed;

Recognizing that the Hyogo Framework for Action specified that health facilities are critical infrastructure that needs to be kept intact in emergencies;

Recognizing further that the South-East Asia Regional Benchmarks, standards and indicators for emergency preparedness and response provide a framework based on which health facilities can be built or modified to withstand the forces of various kinds of hazards and disasters;

Acknowledging the outputs of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction held in June 2009 regarding structural evaluations of health facilities, enforcement of national building codes, financial incentives and mechanisms for retrofitting;

Noting the innovative work of Member States in the Region to reduce the structural and nonstructural risks of health facilities, as well as to increase training and contingency planning;

We, the Health Ministers, commit ourselves to:

- (1) implement the goals of the Hyogo Framework for building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters;
- (2) consider the outputs of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in relation to safe health facilities;
- (3) use the South-East Asia Regional Benchmarks, standards and indicators for emergency preparedness and response to build and modify health facilities to withstand events from various hazards and disasters;
- (4) develop the capacity of health-sector professionals in the science and practice of

health facility preparedness and risk reduction;

- (5) promote assessments of health facilities in Member States using existing diagnostic tools and decision-making instruments;**
- (6) promote the enforcement of national building codes and specific standards for health facilities;**
- (7) include the private sector in all efforts so that health facilities remain resilient to disasters;**
- (8) engage other service and public sectors such as civil engineering, architecture, transport, public works, water and sanitation, energy and finance to strengthen infrastructure related to the functioning of health facilities in emergencies and disasters; and**
- (9) enhance public awareness of the need to make health facilities safe and functional in emergencies;**

We, the Health Ministers of South-East Asia Region, urge all other WHO Member States as well as the Director-General and the Regional Director to continue to provide leadership and technical support in building partnerships between governments, the United Nations and relevant global health initiatives and partnerships, academia, professional bodies, NGOs, related sectors, the media and civil society, to jointly advocate and effectively follow up on all aspects of this Kathmandu Declaration on Protecting Health Facilities from Disasters.



**World Health
Organization**

Regional Office for South-East Asia
World Health House
Indraprastha Estate,
Mahatma Gandhi Marg,
New Delhi-110002, India
Website: www.searo.who.int