

Training Course on Prevention and Crisis Management of Biological Terrorism

18 to 22 July, 2005, at SEARCCT in Malaysia

Recommendations by the Participants based on the outcomes of the training course.

The Participants welcomed the joint initiative taken by the SEARCCT, the Government of Japan and the JICA to hold a training course on prevention and crisis management of biological terrorism. They also expressed appreciation to the Governments of France and Canada for their contribution to the training course. The training course is the third in a series of five seminars organized by the Government of Japan to share expertise about CBRN terrorism among Asian countries. It also reflects the common will to support the SEARCCT as a focal point of regional counter-terrorism cooperation.

The Participants were briefed about the analysis of the threat of Biological Terrorism based on case studies of the past incidents. In addition, the Participants learned about Al Qaeda Anthrax Institute in Afghanistan which demonstrated their clear intention to acquire biological weapons and shared the assessment of threat posed by Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and other local terrorist groups. In view of the availability of pathogenic microorganisms and the possible intent of terrorist organizations to acquire biological weapons, as well as the high consequences that biological terrorism could entail, the participants recognized the risk that terrorists could overcome technical hurdles for perpetrating acts of bioterrorism.

The Participants explored the best policy mix to prevent and respond to bioterrorism through presentations of lecturers and exchange of information and views.

The Participants studied intensively U.S. experiences of Anthrax attacks, other acts and lessons drawn on the incidents. They examined

response measures to emerging and reemerging infectious diseases, such as SARS and avian influenza. They learned various national experiences on bio-security, surveillance as well as response and preparedness, presented by experts from Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, Canada, and the U.S.A.

They heard activities and programs undertaken by the WHO and the OECD in prevention of and response to biological threats.

The Participants shared the recognition that in view of the characteristics of biological terrorism, no single measure is sufficient to effectively deal with it, and that a comprehensive strategy consisting of various measures is needed; They also acknowledged that methodologies to deal with biological terrorism are evolving and that every country is required to develop its policies to reflect national concerns and priorities, including their financial resources, while drawing upon other countries' experiences.

The Participants resolve to contribute to fight against biological terrorism wherever it happens in the region by providing information, expertise and other forms of assistance.

Based on such recognitions, participants recommend that:

1. Every effort should be made to prevent biological terrorism. In this respect, information gathering and law enforcement activities play a crucial part in detecting and disrupting terrorist plots. In addition, a growing importance should be attached to bio-security in order to deny terrorists the access to biological weapons and related biological agents. Accordingly, steps should be taken to reduce the likelihood that high risk agents fall into terrorists' hands, while striking a good balance between healthy development of science and security concerns so that legitimate bioscience operations cannot be compromised. To this end, states and/or laboratories are encouraged to examine the following possibilities;
 - To develop legal and regulatory frameworks for registration and

reporting of pathogenic microorganisms.

- To devise proportionate measures based on risk assessment, combining appropriately physical security, personnel management, material control and accountability, material transfer security, incident response plans and reporting and information security.
- To discuss codes of conduct for scientists working in biological laboratories.
- To establish a guideline on laboratory biosecurity in accordance with guidance on laboratory biosecurity developed by WHO and other International organizations.
- To establish Biological Resource Centres (BRCs) through an appropriate certification procedure in order to participate in a network of exchange of biological materials and data.

2. Considering the difficulty of establishing a perfect system for prevention, early detection of biological attacks is a key to appropriate response. In order to detect at the earliest possible stage symptoms of bio-hazard, the capacity for surveillance and identification of the agent should be strengthened, taking into account of the following points.

- Strengthening disease surveillance in general as it also contributes to defense against manmade outbreaks.
- Introducing where appropriate syndromic surveillance, adapted to national circumstances.
- Establishing a system for collecting necessary information and sharing data among related organizations, including data from zoonosis surveillance in farming stage.
- Developing novel methods and technologies for early identification of causal materials.
- Training medical staff in dealing with pathogens, which could become causalities of emerging and re-emerging diseases.
- Strengthening capacity of laboratories for detecting, identifying, and analyzing biological agents as well as developing diagnostic and treatment methods.

3. In case biological terrorism actually happens, it is essential to take appropriate actions at the initial stage of any incidents. The participants formed the common view that efforts should be strengthened to upgrade the capacity to respond to any incident of biological terrorism, in the areas which would include;
- Setting up coordination mechanism among related agencies (Public Health Agency, Police, Civil Protection Agency, Defense Forces and Health Institutes) and translating them into written manuals. Coordination mechanism should specify lead-agencies for each task, command and control lines, division of responsibilities as well as channels for information exchange.
 - Testing coordination mechanism through table-top exercises including exercises based on internationally described scenario
 - Conducting simulation studies to refine coordination among stake holders and to review the ways on how effectively people should be protected.
 - Raising public awareness and providing timely information about risks as well as basic protection measures.
 - Establishing necessary legal bases to allow for necessary compulsory measures such as quarantine.
 - Designating hospitals specialized in biological incidents and equipping them with appropriate staff and facilities.
 - Ensuring the protection of response personnel, such as medical staff, policemen, firefighters, air/seaport staff.
 - Calculating, and stockpiling appropriate quantity of vaccine and establishing vaccination policy.
 - Empowering the community for active role in disease prevention and control.
4. Given the fact that with today's volume of international trade and travel, bio-hazards can be easily transmitted across international borders, countries should be encouraged to develop regional and international cooperation, including in the following areas.

- Continuing to share experiences and expertise on biosecurity and cooperating for developing guidelines at various international organizations and fora.
- Developing mechanisms internationally and regionally to quickly share information and issue alerts on attacks by biological weapons, including strengthening existing mechanisms, such as the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network.
- Implementing fully the International Health Regulation (IHR) (2005), including designation of the National IHR Focal Point and development, reinforcement and maintenance of capacity to detect assess, notify and report all events which may constitute potential international public concern.
- Promoting networks of laboratories and health institutes for counter biological terrorism, building upon emerging regional networks for infectious disease control.
- Assisting capacity building in various fields, through World Health Organization (WHO)'s Preparedness for Deliberate Epidemics (PDE) Programme, WHO's Emergency and Humanitarian Action (EHA) Programme and regional and bilateral technical assistance programs.

The Participants intend to maintain contacts with each other through e-mail and to make best efforts within their respective competence to realize the above recommendations.

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