



PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



28th PAN AMERICAN SANITARY CONFERENCE

64th SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE

Washington, D.C., USA, 17-21 September 2012

CSP28.R19 (Eng.)
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

RESOLUTION

CSP28.R19

COORDINATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN HEALTH IN CASE OF DISASTERS

THE 28th PAN AMERICAN SANITARY CONFERENCE,

Having reviewed the document *Coordination of International Humanitarian Assistance in Health in Case of Disasters* (Document CSP28/13);

Considering the information related to the policies of ministries of health with regard to international assistance included in the document in reference;

Taking into account the resolutions of the PAHO Directing Council that since 1976 have promoted and succeeded in strengthening the disaster risk reduction and the response capacity of the Member States;

Recognizing the existence of the Regional Disaster Response Team administered by PAHO on behalf of the Member States and the approval of the principles for international assistance at the meeting in San José, Costa Rica, in 1986;

Recalling the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly in which the government of an affected country is requested to ensure the coordination of the international humanitarian response;

Noting the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly that requests the strengthening of the response capacity of the system and the creation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC);

Recognizing the unique and central role of the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in coordinating international humanitarian action, and taking into due consideration the role of national disaster management authorities;

Taking into account Resolution WHA65.20 of the World Health Assembly, which urges WHO to assume the function of lead agency for the Health Cluster and to adopt the necessary measures for activating its response to the member countries immediately,

RESOLVES:

1. To urge the Member States to:
 - (a) ensure that each ministry of health establishes, as appropriate and in coordination with existing national risk management authorities, a coordination mechanism for the health sector for receiving and sending international humanitarian assistance, bearing in mind the health needs of the population;
 - (b) take action so that health ministries or the designated national authorities provide ongoing reports to PAHO, as appropriate, on their mechanism of coordination for international assistance during disasters, so that all foreign agencies including NGOs, the private sector, and international organizations can easily provide assistance while respecting the organization of the country's health sector;
 - (c) strengthen their national systems for health sector response to emergencies and disasters with relevant procedures and standards, including the capacity of making teams and/or assistance available to neighboring and other countries in the spirit of Pan-American solidarity, taking into account regional and subregional mechanisms for mutual assistance;
 - (d) establish systems to identify a roster of experienced professionals in the different fields of response to disasters and public health emergencies and to make them available to the Regional Disaster Response Team administered by PAHO/WHO.

2. To request the Director to:
 - (a) assist countries in time of an emergency and, where appropriate, in mobilizing resources to address the multiple challenges posed by the emergency health response;
 - (b) set aside, make active, and mobilize, at the request of the affected country, sufficient personnel and other resources to provide support for the coordination of international health care in that country, making use of mechanisms such as the Health Cluster, among others, to promote international standards and ensure their application;
 - (c) advocate for WHO, within the framework of the United Nations humanitarian reform process, to include representatives of the governments of the Member States in the Global Health Cluster, in instances where appropriate;
 - (d) advocate that all people, groups, initiatives, or institutions outside the Member State align health-related humanitarian assistance activities in conformity with the national response and the United Nations coordination framework;
 - (e) establish a flexible mechanism for registration and accreditation of rapid-response foreign medical teams with the goal of improving the quality of the medical response in coordination with WHO;
 - (f) support Member States with training to develop the capacity of national teams to assist neighboring and other countries in the event of a disaster.

(Ninth meeting, 21 September 2012)