

MESSAGE



April 7th is observed all over the world as the World Health Day. This year, marks the 61st anniversary of the World Health Day, and this year's theme is "Health facilities in emergencies". This theme rightly emphasizes the role and effectiveness of health care facilities to cope with emergency situations.

The main slogan of the Day is "Save Lives, Make Hospitals Safe in Emergencies" which reflects the necessity of keeping health facilities safe and operationally functional during and after emergencies, so that unexpected patient load and spread of diseases can be contained effectively. The goal of raising awareness in this issue is to effect changes that will ensure, health facilities and services are able to function in the aftermath of emergencies and disasters, protect the lives of patients, serve the affected population and keep health workers safe.

We all are aware that Bangladesh is a disaster-prone country because of its geo-topographical character and its location on a deltaic plain. Keeping the health facilities fully functional and operationally efficient at all times is an uphill challenge for Bangladesh. There have been recent instances of emergency situations, such as the super-cyclone SIDR, floods, landslides, fire and tornadoes, and there have been reports of massive damage to the nation's health infrastructure as well as services, in addition to deaths and injury, and sudden disease outbreaks. Given this scenario, WHO has attached high priority to the prompt provision of technical support to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for better case management and improving response capacities in emergencies. These activities cover crash-training, simulation exercises, mock drills for capacity building, developing or updating of policies, providing drugs, reagents and other logistics to the health facilities, through the WHO collaborative programme with the Government. WHO's support will continue and remain instrumental in reducing deaths and disabilities during emergencies, through better coping strategies for hospitals and clinics.

We remain committed to collaborate more closely and work hand-in-hand with the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, Ministry of Local Government, and other relevant ministries, UN and other Donor agencies, NGOs, and the community. The theme of the World Health Day 2009 underscores the need to develop joint plan of action and response strategies so that health facilities are made more efficient, safer and capable of dealing with emergency health situations at all times in order to mitigate the sufferings of the population.

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