HAITI

PAHO/WHO Technical Cooperation

in the aftermath of the earthquake 2010-2011





Disaster Response

The 12 January earthquake was the most powerful to strike Haiti in 200 years. It killed more than 220,000 people, caused approximately 300,000 injuries and displaced more than one million Haitians. Two hundred staff from the Ministry of Health and Population (MSPP) lost their lives when the building collapsed.

At one point following the earthquake, more than 600 organizations were providing humanitarian aid to Haiti, and currently, around 150 organizations continue to carry out health activities.

Post impact assessments of hospitals revealed that 91 health facilities were functioning; 59 of these in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area (four public hospitals, 34 NGO or private-run hospitals providing health care for free since the earthquake and 21 field hospitals). However many people fled the capital to other departments, putting additional pressure on health facilities especially in: Miragoane, Petit Goave, Grande Goave, Cape Haitian, Les Cayes, Gonaives and along the border with the Dominican Republic.

The collapse of private sector hospitals and, to some extent, the public and "mixte" ones, due to the free provision of health services by the NGOs during the first three months, was an important issue. After 12 April, no-cost services have extended only to free medicines. Institutions have begun to charge once again for consultations, lab tests and radiology/imaging while the NGOs continue to provide free services.

Another challenge relates to access to health services, which is impacted by the departure of some agencies or the arrival of others. Rehabilitation, and especially physical therapy, as well as disease surveillance are critical. The risk of outbreaks has increased due to poor sanitation and crowded conditions (there are approximately over 900 temporary settlements).
The focus now is on rehabilitation and reconstruction. PAHO/WHO experts participated in the preparation of the Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA). The PDNA served as basis for the development of the MSPP's interim plan that will guide the sector over the next18 months, including the reorganization of the health system at three levels (mobile clinics for community health, basic health facilities and hospitals) and redefinition of the health service package at each level of care

Activities carried out :

PAHO/WHO has supported the MSPP in the following areas:

- Leading and managing the Health Cluster and participating in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Cluster and the Nutrition and Logistics Clusters). Sub-clusters were also established in the cities of Leogane and Jacmel and continue to operate today.
- Coordinating actions at national, regional and global levels through the Emergency Operations Center based in Washington D.C, including participation in international meetings and forums related to Haiti.
- Strengthening the PAHO/WHO Country Offices in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and establishing new offices in Leogane, Jacmel and Jimani (border with the Dominican Republic), by deploying more than 130 experts in disaster man agement, logistics, epidemiology, surveillance, communicable disease control, water and sanitation, among others..
- Reactivating the Health Information System
- Distributing medical supplies through PROMESS, the Essential Medicines Program managed by PAHO/WHO since 1992, and diesel fuel so that health facilities can continue to function.
- Helping to restart Public Health Programs (outbreak control and environmental health, maternal and neonatal health, nutri tion, gender based violence, HIV/AIDS, TB, Malaria, Dengue, mental health, vaccination, health services delivery, rehabilita tion services for disabled people)
- Supporting rehabilitation in Fond Parisien, Jacmel and Leogane (planning for staff training in rehabilitation services along the border), vaccinations, and capacity building through training (use of X-Ray equipments, rehabilitation techniques, etc.)

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- Partnering in training activities including a program for waste management in shelters
- A registration system coordinated by MSF and PAHO/WHO is ensuring patients returning to Haiti from the Dominican Republic receive proper follow-up care. The referral system reflects a larger effort throughout Haiti to help recovering patients find appropriate health services.
- Mobilizing approximately US$23 for health sector in the immediate aftermath and coordinating with bilateral donors and humanitarian partners to identify interest in health infrastructure reconstruction.
- Taking part in the preparation of health priorities for the Post Disasters Needs Assessment launched last March 2010 and in the review process for the UN Flash Appeal ("Mid year Review Plan starting mid May 2010)

Next steps:

PAHO/WHO will continue to work with the MSPP and many partners in post disaster recovery. Reconstruction and rehabilitation activities will be well coordinated with the government master plan.

Health Facilities Mapping will be available to all partners through a Google group..

The referral system will be improved to have a better idea of the coverage provided, including in mobile clinics. Reporting forms will be standardized.

Activities related to mental health and disabilities will be mainstreamed into national policy. Coordination and agreement on standards regarding management of supplies for disabled people is needed.

The hurricane and rainy season will begin soon and all clusters are updating contingency plans prepared by the Department of Civil Protection (DPC) by carrying out exercises at departmental level. Disease surveillance remains a priority area..