National Report on national mechanisms to establish and maintain the security and oversight of pathogenic microorganisms and toxins

Prepared by the Islamic Republic of Iran

Introduction

1. The Islamic Republic of Iran has established a functional integrated disease surveillance system, which is quite efficient. Based on this system epidemiological services at the primary health care level have been operational for several years. Never-the-less, harmonization and standardization of the surveillance activities at different levels and among different provinces, improvement of coordination and collaboration between epidemiological and laboratory sections, as well as capacity building and continuous training, especially for the primary health care staff, remain a priority for sustainability and well functioning of the system. Data management and interpretation at the peripheral health facilities also need to be strengthened.

2. Despite the great success in controlling several communicable diseases in the country, Viral hepatitis, Tuberculosis, Typhoid fever, epidemic diarrheal diseases including Cholera and others still represent a public health concern that needs a more systematic and practical approach to control. The geographical situation of the Islamic Republic of Iran exposes it, to a continuous risk of introduction of other emerging diseases and drug resistant pathogens. For example, Crimean Congo Hemorrhagic Fever is on the increase. Therefore, strengthening epidemic preparedness and outbreak response is crucial.

3. Priority areas:

   i. Strengthening epidemic preparedness and response;
   ii. Human resource capacity building in the area of epidemiological; surveillance and data management;
   iii. Upgrading the peripheral public health laboratories;
   iv. Strengthening data analysis and reporting;
   v. Involvement of the private sector in surveillance and response.

4. In view of the above mentioned priorities, following activities have been done:
I. National Bio-Safety Committee (NBSC)

5. The committee has been established in August 2000 pursuant to decree of the President. The purposes of this Committee is to review the issues related to the Protocol on Biodiversity and preparation and compilation of draft national legislation on bio-safety. In this regard the related guidelines and regulations for working with biological agents for human, animal and plants have been drafted by the NBSC. The draft of national legislation on bio-safety has also been submitted to the government.

II. The Comprehensive National Biological Defense Plan

6. The Comprehensive National Biological Defense Plan was approved by the Supreme National Security Council in 1998. It coordinate nationwide action in order to protect human, animal and plants against biological threat.

III. National Committee on Microbial and Toxin Diseases

7. The National Committee on Microbial and Toxin Diseases was established in 1998. The Committee is composed of relevant ministers and is chaired by the first deputy President. Ministry of Health is responsible for the cases of natural outbreaks of human diseases. The Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture is in charge of management of natural diseases in animals and Plants. Finally in case of use of biological weapons or bio-terrorism actions the defense authorities will manage the crises.

IV. Committee Against Bio-Terrorism (CABT)

8. The Committee Against Bio-Terrorism was established in 2001 to function under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education. The CABT has so far made following measures:

   a. Coordination among related organizations;
   b. Conducting several training workshops and the preparation of educational manuals;
   c. Assigning the reference laboratories in Ministry of Health and Medical Education for detection and identification of suspected biological agents and toxins;
   d. Handling the suspected parcel with probable contamination of biological agents;

V. Laboratories regulations and guidelines;

9. Laboratories, institutes and organizations which work with biological materials in the Islamic Republic of Iran apply national, international regulations and guidelines such as:

   • Reference Laboratory of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, applies guidelines and regulations of the MOH&ME and WHO;
   • Food and Drug Control Laboratory of the Islamic Republic of Iran applies guidelines, regulations and manuals of the MOH&ME, WHO, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Organization International d'Epizoode (OIE) and International Labor Organization (ILO);
   • The Pasteur Institute of Iran implements manuals and regulations of WHO and the Pasteur Institute of Paris;
• Razi Vaccine Research and Serum Institute applies WHO, OIE, and FAO guidelines;
• The Organization for Plant Protection of Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture applies a set of national legislation and regulations for protection of plant, adopted in 1967;
• The Iran Veterinary Organization applies the National Plan for surveillance and control of animal diseases; and OIE guidelines;

VI. Relevant Government Authorities:

• The Ministry of Health and Medical Education;
• The Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture Covering the animal and plant pathogens;
• Environmental Protection Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran;
• The Ministry of Science, Research and Technology,
• The Ministry of Trade,
• The Customs Department (affiliated to the Ministry of Economic Affairs) applies the guidelines of relevant Ministries;

VII. Related web sites:

1. National Bio-safety Committee;
   Web site: ibd.nrcgeb.ac.ir
2. Iranian Genetic Society,
   Web site: igs.nrcgeb.ac.ir
3. Razi Vaccine and Serum Institute,
   Web site: www.rvsri.com
4. Iranian Bio diversity Convention,
   Web site: www.biodiversity.ir
5. Iranian Biosafety Database
   Web site: ibd.nrcgeb.ir
6. Iranian Biotechnology Society,
   Web site: ibs.nrcgeb.ac.ir
7. The Ministry of Health, and Medical Education
   Web site: www.hbi.dmr.or.ir
8. The Pasteur Institute of Iran
   Web site: www.pasteur.ar.ir
9. The Agriculture Biotechnology Research Institute
   Web site: www.abrtac.ir