

WHO Office in Lyon

*Report of
activities*



2001–2004

WHO Office in Lyon
Department of Communicable Disease Surveillance & Response



**World Health
Organization**

PHOTOS CAPTIONS AND CREDITS

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WHO/CDS/CSR/LYO/2004.17



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Design & Layout: L'IV Com Sàrl, Morges, Switzerland

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FOREWORD



Message from the Assistant Director-General

Dr Anarfi Asamoah-Baah

The foresight of the French Government, and commitment of the City of Lyon and the Greater Lyon Urban Community and Area Economic Development Agency, and the Mérieux Foundation, enabled WHO to establish this Office in Lyon with the mission to strengthen the capacities in developing countries to detect and respond to epidemics of infectious disease. In the light of world events since 2000, we have all become aware of the urgent and critical need for these capacities worldwide, to protect national and global health security. The WHO Office in Lyon is at the centre of the Organization's efforts to increase these capacities worldwide.

Message from the Director CSR

Dr Guénaél Rodier

An essential programme of the WHO Department of Communicable Disease Surveillance and Response, the WHO Office in Lyon plays a fundamental bridging role between headquarters, regional offices and activities in the field. The City of Lyon, with its rich biotechnological and medical resources, has provided many valuable partnerships with WHO. We will endeavour to continue fostering these partnerships in support of countries facing the challenge of developing and maintaining early warning and response systems.



Message from the Director, Lyon

Dr Stefano Lazzari



It is an honour to present this report of the activities and achievements of the WHO Office in Lyon. Since 2001, 64 laboratory specialists from 29 developing countries have participated in specially-tailored training to assist them to strengthen their national public health laboratories; numerous guidelines, tools and training modules have been developed and field tested; more than 55 countries have taken part in surveillance and field epidemiology strengthening activities; biosafety and preparedness for deliberate epidemics have been incorporated, and modern information technology fully exploited, all to improve national and global capacity to detect, respond to and contain epidemic threats.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

ON a global scale, epidemics and newly-emerging infections constitute a perpetual threat to the health of humankind. Deaths, suffering, closure of borders, commercial sanctions – during an epidemic the cost in terms of life and livelihood is enormous. Within the scope of the International Health Regulations, agreed by Member States, the World Health Organization is working to assure global health security through rapid recognition and timely response to epidemics and emerging infections.

Strategic approach

The WHO strategy, founded on global partnership and under the umbrella of the International Health Regulations, has three pillars – specific programmes for controlling known epidemic diseases, an international alert and response network ready to act rapidly in the case of an epidemic anywhere in the world, and a programme for strengthening national capacity for epidemic alert and response, which is the focus of the WHO Office in Lyon.

Organizational paradigm



Following the 'three-pillars' model, the Department of Communicable Disease Surveillance and Response in WHO HQ, is responsible for translating the strategy into action, in close liaison with the WHO regional offices.

The lack of diagnostic capacity in public health laboratories in developing countries remains one of the principal obstacles to improving the surveillance and containment of epidemic-prone diseases.



Addressing this lack was the starting-point for the programmes developed in the WHO Office in Lyon. The facilities and partnerships made available to WHO in Lyon have enabled activities to be launched in a practical, cost-effective manner.



action-packed calendar

2000

- The convention agreeing the implantation of the WHO Office in Lyon, France, signed by Dr Brundtland, Director-General of WHO, Ms Dominique Gillot, State Secretary for Health and Handicapped, Government of France, Mr Jacques Moulinier, Vice-President of the Greater Lyon Urban Community, representing Mr Raymond Barre, and Charles Mérieux, President of the Marcel Mérieux Foundation

2001

January–June

- The WHO Office in Lyon opened (February 2001) with Dr Diego Buriot as Director
- First group of participants of the Training Programme for Laboratory Specialists enrolled (from Central African countries)

2001

July–December

- Biosafety project joined Lyon programme

2002

January–June

- Second group of participants of the Training Programme for Laboratory Specialists enrolled (from Middle Eastern and north African countries)
- Meeting held on “Natural and intentional epidemic risks in the European Region: strengthening alert mechanisms”

2002

July–December

- Strengthening surveillance systems project joined Lyon programme
- Launch of the Quality Assurance programme in WHO African Region countries
- Third group of participants of the Training Programme for Laboratory Specialists enrolled (from eastern Europe and former Soviet Union countries)
- Documentation of integrated disease surveillance and response implementation in WHO African and Eastern Mediterranean Regions
- Training workshop held in Iraq on surveillance and control of communicable diseases in complex emergencies

- World Health Assembly Resolution WHA54.14
WHO to: “...devise relevant international tools, and to provide technical support to Member States for developing or strengthening preparedness and response activities against risks posed by biological agents...”

- Terrorist attacks in USA
- Anthrax outbreak in USA

- World Health Assembly Resolution WHA55.16,
Member States to: “Treat deliberate use as a global public health threat... Respond by sharing expertise, information and resources...”

2000–2004

AN ACTION-PACKED CALENDAR

- War in Iraq
- SARS epidemic

2003

January–June

- Support provided to communicable disease surveillance and control in Iraq
- First workshop on “SARS laboratory diagnosis and epidemiological considerations” held in China. Followed by workshops in each WHO region

- Dr Lee took office as Director-General of WHO

2003

July–December

- Preparedness for Deliberate Epidemics project joined Lyon programme
- Draft guidelines to assess national health capacity to manage health risks of deliberate use of biological and chemical agents field-tested
- Surveillance Global Consultation with more than 80 participants from Member States representing all WHO regions, WHO regional offices and HQ, technical partners, training institutions, surveillance networks and donors
- Last session with the first group of participants of the Training Programme for Laboratory Specialists enrolled (from Central African countries)

- Avian influenza outbreak
- Laboratory-acquired cases of SARS
- The European Union of 25 countries
- Council and the European Parliament adopted enabling legislation to create a European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

2004

January–June

- Dr Stefano Lazzari appointed as Director of the WHO Office in Lyon
- Meeting held on twinning partnerships between national laboratories in developing countries and specialized institutions
- Fourth group of participants to the Training Programme for Laboratory Specialists enrolled (from Sahelian countries)

- Darfur humanitarian crisis
- Olympic Games in Athens, Greece
- Intergovernmental Working Group on the Revision of the International Health Regulations

2004

July–December

- Infection control project joined Lyon programme
- Setting up an early warning system for epidemic-prone diseases in the Darfur humanitarian crisis
- Development of an early warning and reporting system for the Olympic Games
- Launch of the Internet portal for distance follow-up for the Training Programme for Laboratory Specialists

OBJECTIVES

IN seeking to implement a strategy of national capacity strengthening for the detection and containment of epidemic-prone diseases, the programme of the WHO Office in Lyon was originally formulated around two major objectives:

■ To strengthen laboratory capacity *through*

- establishing a two-year training programme for senior laboratory personnel from developing countries, involving alternating periods of instruction in Lyon and fieldwork in the home country;
- helping to improve laboratory infrastructure in developing countries by providing Internet access, facilitating access to equipment and reagents, on-the-job training, etc;
- establishing a system of quality assurance of laboratory tests.

■ To improve preparedness and response to epidemics *through*

- developing multidisciplinary human resources in epidemiology to improve investigation of epidemics of infectious disease;
- providing human and logistic support for response to epidemics of infectious disease.



To achieve these objectives, **four major functions** were elaborated: training; in-country support; development of standards, guidelines, tools and provision of expert technical assistance; and information-sharing, networking and partnership.

Since the conception of the WHO Lyon Office in 2000, and in light of recent world events (e.g. SARS, anthrax, avian influenza), the objectives have evolved to include 12 interrelated projects in national capacity strengthening. This resulted in an expansion in both the range of activities and the size of the WHO Lyon Office.

functions

MAJOR PROJECT FUNCTION	● Laboratory capacity strengthening	● Epidemic preparedness & response
Training	● Training programme for laboratory specialists	● Field epidemiology training
In-country support	● Strengthening laboratory infrastructure ● Quality assurance	● Support for epidemic response ● Surveillance systems strengthening
Standards, guidelines, tools & expert technical assistance	● Tools for laboratory specialists ● Biosafety ● Preparedness for deliberate epidemics	● Early warning systems
Information-sharing, networking and	● Partnership & laboratory twinning	

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