

**NTS Bulletin May 2015****Reinforcing Health Security in ASEAN**

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With the recent rise of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, Ebola, multi-drug resistant tuberculosis, it is important to further reinforce ASEAN's preparedness to tackle infectious diseases.

**Cooperation on Health Security**

Has there been progress in terms of health security in ASEAN? The past fifteen years highlight two critical milestones for cooperation on health security in ASEAN. The first milestone was triggered by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003 which effectively securitised infectious diseases in ASEAN. After SARS and a series of avian influenza outbreaks (H5N1 and H1N1), a number of regional mechanisms were put in place, including the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Task Force (2004), a host of ASEAN Plus Three (APT) mechanisms that emerged from the Emerging Infectious Disease Programme (2004) including the Field Epidemiology Training Network, Emerging Infectious Disease website and the Partnership Laboratories. SARS and avian influenza were the impetus for the regional health agenda to be primarily concentrated on infectious diseases with pandemic potential.

Another milestone is the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint in 2009 that laid out 55 health action lines which were further operationalised in the ASEAN Strategic Framework on Health Development (2010-2015). The framework explicitly charted a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach including collaboration, cooperation and partnerships on health which were outlined into five areas that include, but are not limited to, capability building in communicable disease control, enhancing food security and safety; providing access to healthcare and promoting healthy lifestyles; building disaster-resilient nations and safer communities and ensuring a drug-free ASEAN. Some of these action lines are implemented with other working groups in other ASEAN Community pillars which further reinforce the need for cooperation with the political and economic spheres of community building. Various aspects of disease prevention and control, disaster resilience and the eradication of drugs require not only health-centred approaches but also political and economically-motivated solutions – interventions that are not centred solely on access to a global public good but also in the responsibility to protect at-risk communities and vulnerable groups of society.

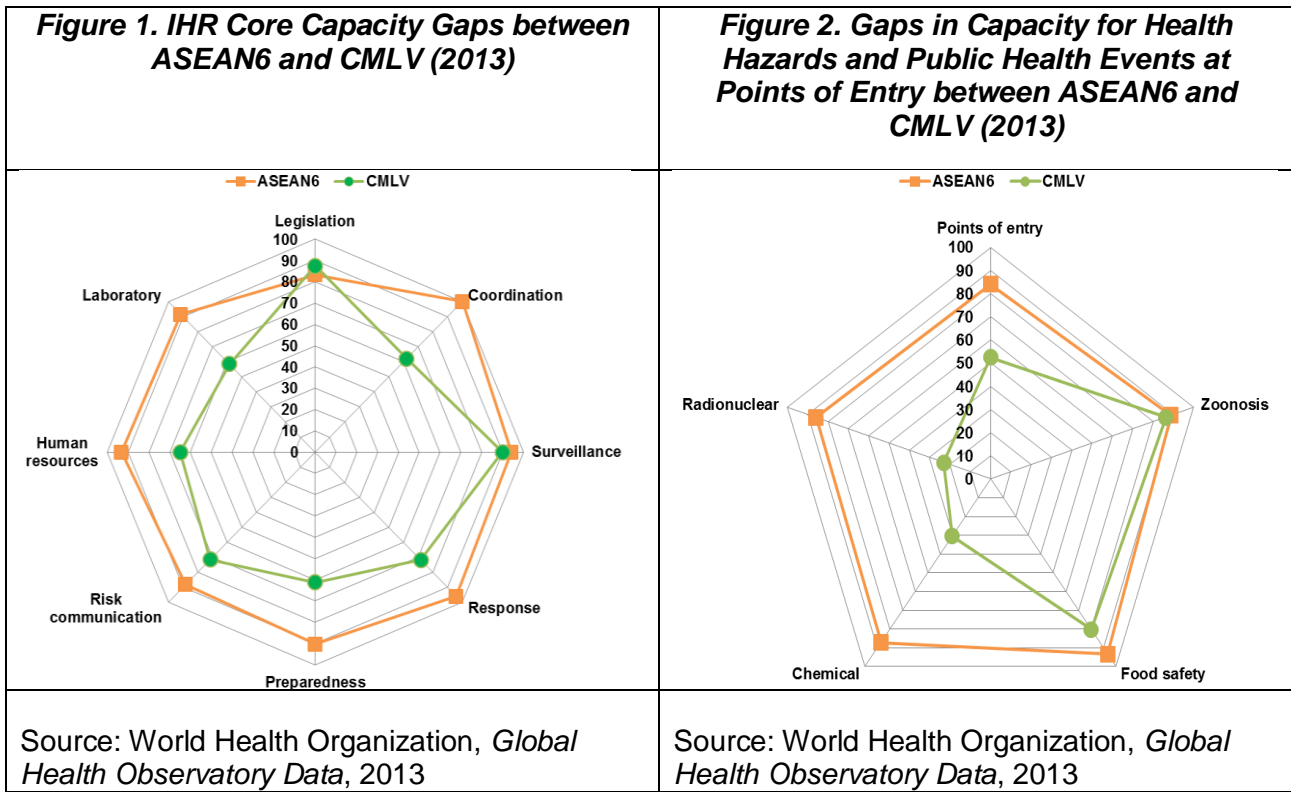
**Communicable Disease Control: Vital Progress but Substantive Gaps**

ASEAN clearly have the appropriate regional frameworks and mechanisms for collaboration, cooperation and partnerships on health security, however there are still substantial gaps among ASEAN member states in terms of globally required core capacities.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>A critical indicator of the status of health security is the International Health Regulation's (IHR) Core Capacity Index based on 28 indicators for eight core capacities (as shown in Figure 1) that measure national, intermediate and community response levels to public health risks and public health emergencies of international concern (PHEIC). In addition to monitoring these capacities,

Despite the WHO-led Asia Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases (APSED) that supported ASEAN programmes for capability building in communicable disease control, the International Health Regulation (IHR) core capacity gaps within ASEAN are still of substantive concern. Based on the rationale for the ASEAN Community building, the less developed CMLV group (Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao PDR and Vietnam) needs to be integrated with the more developed ASEAN6 (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand). In terms of the eight core capacities, the CMLV group is almost at par on average with the ASEAN6 group on surveillance and legislation, but the gap in terms of coordination, preparedness, response, laboratory and human resources is still substantial (see Figure 1). The CMLV group is also almost at par with ASEAN6 in terms of zoonosis and food safety, but it still has considerable capability building needs for chemical and radionuclear health hazards and public health events at points of entry (see Figure 2). Gaps in critical capacities such as coordination and preparedness, and capabilities for public health events at points of entry pose serious threats to regional health security, as viruses know no political boundaries.



### Health Security beyond 2015

There has been substantive regional effort into developing core capacities for international public health emergencies. However, with the funding of capacity building and training programmes hinged on three to five year cycles, sustaining the momentum and avoiding pandemic fatigue is indispensable. Including the IHR core capacity index to measure the region’s capability to control communicable diseases in the ASEAN Community Scorecard is critical. Aside from ASEAN dialogue partners and their aid agencies, a number of nongovernment organisations, philanthropic foundations, the private sector and academic communities, have all significantly contributed to regional health activities, from setting up collaborative surveillance mechanisms to supporting training networks. Thus, ASEAN would not need any new mechanism for communicable disease control as it already has the regional framework for it. The only thing needed is to reinforce and sustainably support existing mechanisms to strengthen health security in the region.

ASEAN has come far in terms of the progress that has already been made in building its IHR core capacities. Addressing the capacity gaps for health hazards and public health events at points of entry will need a more comprehensive approach that entails all three ASEAN Community pillars. ASEAN cannot be

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human health hazards (zoonosis, food safety, chemical and radionuclear) and public health events at points of entry (PoE) are also monitored.

complacent in terms of closely assessing and improving its capacity to tackle public health emergencies that not only endanger regional health security but also multiply political and socio-economic insecurities.

### **Recommended Readings**

- Mely Caballero-Anthony and Gianna Gayle Amul, 2015, Health and human security: Pathways to advancing a human-centred approach to health security in East Asia, in Simon Rushton and Jeremy Youde (eds.), Routledge Handbook of Global Health Security, London and New York: Routledge.
- World Health Organization, 2008, International Health Regulations (2005), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Geneva.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY**

### **News & Commentaries**

- Joseph D'urso, Southeast Asia faces increasingly intense climate events: Analysts, Reuters, 1 April 2015.
- UN launches 'Data for Climate Action' Initiative, International Institute for Sustainable Development Reporting Services, 22 April 2015.
- Hiatus in global average temperatures has little effect on projected temperatures in 2100, Science Daily, 23 April 2015.
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- Climate change threatens major building projects, say Chinese expert, The Guardian, 4 May 2015.

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- Kelly Levin et al., 2015, Accounting framework for the Post-2020 period, Nordic Council of Ministers, Copenhagen.
- Navroz K Dubash et al, 2015, Informing India's energy and climate debate: Policy lessons from modelling studies, New Delhi: Centre for Policy Research.
- Wetlands International, 2015, Accounting for peatland hotspots, Wetlands International Position Paper.

### **Events & Announcements**

- The Sustainable Stock Exchanges Regional Dialogue: South East Asia, 18 May 2015, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2015, 21–22 May 2015, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Bonn Climate Change Conference, SBSTA 42, SBI 42 & ADP 2.9, 1–11 June 2015, Bonn, Germany

## ENERGY SECURITY

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- Raras Cahyafitri, Govt gets serious about renewable energy development, The Jakarta Post, 21 April 2015.
- Jack Kim, South Korea, U.S. reach deal to revise civil nuclear pact, Reuters, 22 April 2015.
- Kentaro Hamada, Japan court approves restart of reactors in boost for Abe's nuclear policy, 22 April 2015.
- Joash Pleiter, China to build Iranian nuclear power plants, Future Directions International, 22 April 2015.
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- Staffan A. Qvist, Barry W. Brook, 2015, Environmental and health impacts of a policy to phase out nuclear power in Sweden, Energy Policy, Vol. 84, pp. 1–10.

### Events & Announcements

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- Wheat procurement may miss 30-million tonnes target this year: Government, The Economic Times, 28 April 2015.
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- Nepal: Quake's impact on food security likely 'very high,' warns UN agency, UN News Centre, 30 April 2015.
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- Finnigan Wa Simbeye, Tanzania: CTI applauds move towards an African FTA, All Africa, 12 May 2015.
- Drought-hit Southern Africa at risk of food shortage – WFP, Channel News Asia, 12 May 2015.

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- Zhuo Ting Li, J.Y. Yang, C.F. Drury, G. Hoogenboom, 2015, Evaluation of the DSSAT-CSM for simulating yield and soil organic C and N of a long-term maize and wheat rotation experiment in the Loess Plateau of Northwestern China, *Agricultural Systems*, Vol. 135, pp.90–104.

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- Innovations in Climate-Smart Agriculture for Small-Scale Producers, 14–17 May 2015, Montego Bay, Jamaica.
- World Food System Conference 2015, 21–26 June 2015, Ascona, Switzerland.
- IPC Global Event – EXPO Milano 2015: Chronic Food Insecurity and Nutrition Classifications, 20–21 May, Milan, Italy.

## **HEALTH SECURITY**

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- Limkittikul et al., 2014, Epidemiological trends of dengue disease in Thailand (2000–2011): A systematic literature review, *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases*, Vol. 8, No. 11.

## **Events & Announcements**

- Public Health Conference 2015, 11–13 July 2015, Bangkok, Thailand.
- 8<sup>th</sup> European Public Health Conference, 14–17 October 2015, Milan, Italy.

## **PEACE, HUMAN SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT**

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- Emma Campbell-Mohn, China: The world's new peacekeeper?, *The Diplomat*, 8 April 2015.

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- IrineRoba, Advancing human rights after the AAC and the ASEAN summit, The Jakarta Post, 7 May 2015.
- New UN refugee agency report documents alarming surge in Bay of Bengal crossings, UN News Centre, 8 May 2015.

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- Alexandra Bilak et al., 2015, Global overview 2015: People internally displaced by conflict and violence, Geneva: Norwegian Refugee Council and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre.
- Jun Zhao, 2015, China and the uneasy case for universal human rights, Human Rights Quarterly, Vol.37, No.1, pp. 29–52.

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- Public seminar: Preventing Election Violence in Myanmar, 27 May 2015, Brisbane, Australia.
- International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, 29 May 2015.

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- Two thousand human trafficking victims benefit annually from UN Trust Fund, UNODC, 14 April 2015.
- Bandung Message pledges to tackle transnational crime, terrorism, Xinhuanet, 23 April 2015. Thailand downplays probe into police links to human trafficking, Channel News Asia, 11 May 2015.
- Bryan Harris, Easing of Asian border controls puts migrants in peril, UN warns, South China Morning Post, 3 May 2015.
- INTERPOL issues global alert for potentially lethal illicit diet drug, INTERPOL, 4 May 2015.
- Police target trafficking kingpins, Bangkok Post, 5 May 2015.
- Ryan Grenoble, Wildlife trafficker tries to smuggle 24 endangered cockatoos in plastic bottles, gets caught, The Huffington Post, 7 May 2015.
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- Christine Goodall, 2015, Shouting towards the sky: The role of religious individuals, communities, organisations and institutions in support for refugees and asylum seekers, New Issues in Refugee Research Paper No. 275, Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

## **Events & Announcements**

- CIFAL-RSO Training Workshop on Enhancing a Victim Centred Approach to Trafficking in Persons, 22–25 June 2015, Jeju, Republic of Korea.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Cybercrime and Cybersecurity, 24–25 June 2015, Morocco.
- Call for Presentations: Slavery Past, Present and Future, 1<sup>st</sup> Global Meeting, 7–9 July 2015, Oxford, United Kingdom.

## **HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RESPONSE**

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- Mely Caballero-Anthony, Alistair D. B. Cook, Julius Cesar Imperial Trajano, Nepal earthquake: Enhancing international humanitarian cooperation, RSIS Commentaries, 27 April 2015.
- Nepal: opening first field hub, UN health agency expands support to areas cut off by quake, UN News Centre, 3 May 2015.
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- Pradumna Bickram Rana, Nepal earthquake: Could a stronger and more scenic country emerge?, RSIS Commentaries, 11 May 2015.
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- The Asian Conference on Peace, Humanitarian Aid and Service, 6–8 August 2015, Hiroshima, Japan.
- AIDF Asia: Aid & Response Summit 2015, 16–18 June 2015, Bangkok, Thailand.

## **WATER SECURITY**

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- UAE delegation advances water security debate at the 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, Water Online, 21 April 2015.
- Elizabeth Harrington, USDA spends \$900,000 to teach ‘meta-thinking’ about water to children, The Washington Free Beacon, 22 April 2015.
- Kamran Haider and Natalie Obiko Pearson, Even China won’t finance this dam as water fight looms, Bloomberg, 22 April 2015.
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- Alyssa Martino, Water scarcity is helping radicalize the Middle East, Vice, 25 April 2015.
- Swaran Singh, Water was and geopolitics, The Hindu, 26 April 2015.
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- Mwangi S. Kimenyi and John Mukum Mbaku, The limits of the new “Nile Agreement”, Brookings Institute, 28 April 2015.
- Bijan Khajehpour, Iran’s water crisis reaches critical levels, Al-Monitor, 1 May 2015.
- Yee Xiang Yun, Cloud seeding as dams dry up in Johor, The Star, 1 May 2015.

### **Selected Publications**

- IANAS and UNESCO, 2015, Urbanwater challenges in the Americas: A perspective from the Academies of Sciences, Mexico.
- Dimitrios Zikos, Alevgul H. Sorman and Marisa Lau, 2015, Beyond water security: A securitisation and identity in Cyprus, International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics, Vol.15.

### **Events & Announcements**

- Water and Energy 2015: Opportunities for Energy and Resource Recovery in the Changing World, 8–10 June 2015, Washington DC, The United States of America.
- WEF-EESS Asia-Pacific Wastewater Treatment and Reuse Conference 2015, 28 June – 1 July 2015, Singapore.