



اتحاد المستشفيات العربية
ARAB HOSPITALS FEDERATION

DISASTER & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

- DEPP

FOR HEALTHCARE SECTOR



DEPP Strategic Framework

"Be Prepared to Protect, Be Ready for a better Recovery"

March 2022

“Be Prepared to Protect, Be Ready for a better Recovery”

CONTENT

Acknowledgements	_____	P.2
Introduction	_____	P.3
Context	_____	P.4
Purpose, objectives, Action	_____	P.6
Principles	_____	P.7
Key Success Factors	_____	P.8
Strategic Actions	_____	P.10
Recommendations	_____	P.12
Global Strategies & Frameworks	_____	P.14

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Introduction

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a lot has been done by the Arab Countries and their Healthcare sectors, despite the international economic recession and the challenges that the Arab countries are facing. The tremendous effort that has been done by the Arab governments to fight, control, raise awareness, and advocate for vaccination has been appreciated by the international & Regional communities.

The Arab Hospitals Federation - AHF has been following up on the COVID-19 pandemic closely and observing the great achievements that have been done by the governments in the Arab Countries.

The AHF has strategically sensed at the beginning of this pandemic the necessity to work on a new Strategic Framework and guideline for "Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Plan - DEPP".

The sole purpose is to foster, advocate, raise and create a platform to build solid programs and networks for efficient Disaster and Emergency management in and among each healthcare facility and institutions of the Arab World.

The ongoing challenge is to broaden the focus of disaster and risk management for health organization from response and recovery to a more proactive approach

which emphasizes and highlights on prevention and mitigation, and the development of community capacities to provide timely and effective response to disaster.

Research and best practice showed that with proper preparation, healthcare providers can keep staff, patients and community members as safe and ready as possible. Therefore, the Arab Hospitals Federation has recognized the importance of disaster and risk management for years, and has spread forward-thinking to help healthcare sector face such challenges but now, it is the time to present a State of the art Strategic Framework in collaboration with all Healthcare parties in Arab World and the concerned organizations, in addition to the support of AHF members in order to have a safe and sustainable Healthcare future.

The Strategic Framework is prepared by the Executive Council in the Federation and Healthcare Experts.

It includes key components, principles and recommendations to have a solid "Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Plan - DEPP" which is dedicated to the Arab Healthcare sector.

Context

Disaster and Emergency Preparedness is everyone's business. There are many hazards which threaten our communities. When these hazards actually come into contact with us, they may affect our lives and the resources we have to deal with them, thereby causing emergency or disaster situations.

Disasters and Emergencies can happen at any moment - and, they usually occur without warning. When an emergency strikes, our immediate safety and prompt recovery will depend on the existing levels of preparedness among health care facilities and at the national level.

In December 2019, the whole World stood still in the face of a micro virus. Most of the humanity did not know about and most of the international governments were not ready. The COVID-19 pandemic was an eye opener to all humanity that we are vulnerable to numerous non visible factors that threaten our daily lives, social interactions, businesses and healthcare systems to name a few. For the world this pandemic lead to a chain reaction of disruption of international supply chain management to fight this virus.

This pandemic was not new, and it will not be the last. In our World there are numerous natural and non-natural disasters that happen on daily basis. Some are noticed and some are not.

Many Arab Governments have put solid and good actions that were highly praised by international healthcare organizations.

These plans and programs, which were called generically Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Plan contained the following dimensions:

- **National policies and procedures**
- **Health in all Policies**
- **Vulnerability assessment matrices**
- **Relief teams preparation**
- **Recovery teams development**
- **Resource allocation**
- **Community and civic society support**
- **Government and community interactions**
- **Inter country assistance and cooperation**
- **International assistance for the poor and most impacted countries.**

Nevertheless, all of these programs were trying to meet the people's expectations when facing the COVID-19 pandemic which was a game changer .

Multiple contributing factors could be analyzed and awaiting the evidence based public health, academia and action research to produce solid knowledge to be shared and learned from, as well as to transfer knowledge to actions and policies. However, from a general perspective the main reasons for not properly managing the COVID - 19 or any disaster were:

- Leadership
- Political Commitments
- Policy Makers
- Risk and Vulnerability assessment tools and matrices
- Learning and educating the teams
- Resources availability
- Rapid Response teams
- Recovery evaluation
- Youth and Civic involvement

In the Arab World, the situation was not different from the international community. Disaster and Emergency Plans are established and run by each Arab government, which multiple efforts have been made to develop and create more robust and rigorous plans.

The Arab world includes a wide variety of countries of different economical powers and each is vulnerable to various types of disasters and emergencies such as: floods, draughts, famine, hurricanes, pandemics, fires, civil unrest, cyberattacks, cold weather and acts of war.

The management of such disasters and emergencies have been localized and acted upon by each government with solid help from either neighboring countries or more developed ones. The assistance provided usually comes in providing manpower, food, shelter, medical care, and building back the affected side.

There have been a lot of success stories and real achievements in the Arab states. However, much is yet to be done in order to have a more concrete mutual assistance as comprehensive and integrated Arab

framework for Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plan.

Internationally, Emergency preparedness is addressed by a range of global frameworks and initiatives related to health, emergencies and disasters. These include:

- Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World (1994)
- Hyogo Framework for Action (2005)
- The International Health Regulations (IHR 2005)
- The Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) (2014-2018)
- The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030)
- The Paris Agreement on Climate Change (2015)
- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (New York, September 2015).
- Global Health Security Agenda 2024 Framework "GHSA 2024" (2018- 2024)
- Universal Health Coverage (UHC) 2030.
- The 53rd session of the Arab Health Ministers Council discussing KSA Proposal for an Indicative action plan for Arab countries to confront emergencies

These are complemented by regional strategies that address preparedness and disaster risk management around the world, such as the Asia- Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases (APSED); the Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) framework; and Health 2020 in the European Region.

Purpose & Objectives

After the COVID-19, the Arab Hospitals Federation - AHF has sensed the paramount importance of having a professional "Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Plan – DEPP "in each country and across the Arab World. The main reason is that the main people who are always implicated by such disasters and emergencies are the healthcare staff, the white soldiers. Whatever the disasters type, impact, occurrence, and duration are, the healthcare staff are always on the frontiers to provide the best possible care both physiologically and mentally.

The lack of planning and proper management of emergencies and disasters has many challenges and consequences such as but not limited to:

- Missing vision and unified leadership to implement and manage the disaster
- Failure to equip and train healthcare workers on the use of essential protective equipment necessary for their safety
- Inadequate services to respond to the community health needs in this critical period
- The inability to provide the necessary resources to confront the disaster
- The inability to be back quickly to normal life after the disaster

That is why, the Arab Hospitals Federation - AHF have gathered experts to provide a set of recommendations and guidelines for comprehensive and integrated Arab Strategic Framework to the respected Arab governments and healthcare facilities and institutions to adopt and advocate for the development of a new roadmap to achieve a better and comprehensive Emergency and Disaster Plans and Programs.

Purpose

The Purpose of developing an Arab plan is to describe and unify the scope, capabilities, accountabilities, and responsibilities of the Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Plan response for the health care facility. Also the plan should be dynamic and can be changed and updated as the emergency planning environment and staff knowledge changes.

Objective

The main objective of the Arab Hospitals Federation - AHF is that in first quarter of year 2023 a complete, holistic, & comprehensive DEPP should be effective and implemented across the Arab world. Also clear policies and procedures should be established by each country and hospital.

Principles

This framework is built upon the following set of principles:

1. Keeping and restoring the health of communities. It is the highest priority for Disaster and Emergency Preparedness.
2. Healthcare workers are the first responders and the first victims, so they should be represented in all activities around developing and implementing this plan.
3. Preparedness requires sustained governmental commitment, partnerships, and funding. It is a shared responsibility that requires coordination between parties, effective partnerships between public and private actors, NGO'S, donors, technical agencies and Healthcare Institutions.
4. Building Resilience are needed for faster recovery.
5. A risk management approach that supports the assessment, planning and implementation of Disasters & emergency management actions including prevention and mitigation of risks, preparedness activities, coordinated response, and recovery.
6. Addressing the health dimensions of Disaster and Emergency Preparedness requires the health system to interact with other government sectors at all levels of the national system; the commercial sector; and NGOS.

Key Success Factors

Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Strategic framework should take into consideration two key success factors:

- **Disaster and Emergency Preparedness cascading and levels.**
- **Strategic approaches to preparedness.**
- **Relationship with the other Health components.**

1. Disaster and Emergency Preparedness needs to be implemented at all levels

• **Community Level:** Communities must take ownership of their preparedness and strengthen it for emergencies ranging in scale from local or national events to pandemics and disasters.

They should be represented in the development of national policies and processes and should be included in the implementation of all Disasters & emergency preparedness activities.

NGOs, private sector and other community actors play important roles in community-based Disasters & emergency preparedness, providing additional resources to match with the competencies of the country.

• **National Level:** Usually, national policies and legislation describe the roles and responsibilities of ministries, local government and other stakeholders for preparedness. Preparedness efforts should be made for emergencies that occur on a local or national scale as well as for large-scale disasters and pandemics with international complications.

• **International and regional Level:** Global and regional preparedness is essential for responses that surpass the capacities of national authorities to provide a range of technical and financial assistance that can strengthen country and community preparedness.

The Components of a strategic plan for managing and preparing for Disasters & emergencies should be based on the Cooperation between Arab countries, Creation of plans and programs at the national level and Creation of plans and programs at the hospital level.

2. Strategic approaches to preparedness.

The Strategic Approach to Disaster and Emergency Preparedness relies on many aspects such:

1. Having a clear vision
2. Appointing an authentic Leadership team
3. Setting clear Objectives
4. Assigning the teams with clear roles
5. Allocating resources
6. Training
7. Assessing Operational readiness
8. Assessing Health systems resilience
9. Building Partnerships
10. Benefiting from Technology
11. Evaluating & Implementing Continuous Improvement.

3. Relationship with the other Health components.

The Necessity to coordinate and collaborate with other teams in AHF involved in other projects, activities & strategies such:

- Healthcare Facilities Design
- Digital Health
- Staff Development
- Simulation and Training
- Leadership and Command Centers
- Resources

Strategic Actions

**Strategic Actions need to be put in place on two different levels :
National & Hospitals Level**

1. National Level

Develop a model and a guideline for creating plans and programs for emergency and disasters management for use by each country.

- Create a guideline to be used by and between hospitals and stakeholders.
- Create a clear and practical model through all hospitals and stakeholders to create a clear disaster management plan.
- Assessing the needs of each party and helping to overcome obstacles.
- Monitoring the proper status of programs.
- Establishing a national committee in each country to assist in developing plans and programs.
- Laying the training foundations for the establishment and implementation of plans .

**Work to develop programs and plans for the post disaster period
A new social and economic system.**

The new systems should be based on:

- A new concept of education, research and jobs
- Greater reliance on technology and distance learning, giving priority to epidemiological research and preventing the risk of biological wars.
- Reconsidering the nature of future jobs and investment by activating proactive programs that predict the nation's resources and its economic and social capabilities so that new jobs can be approved and the existing ones restored.
 - Advanced use of telehealth and telemedicine in diagnosis and treatment whenever needed.
- Reconsidering the investment in enhancing social behaviors based on teamwork and human orientation from educational aspect.
- Future plans to deal with the service sector including restaurants, hotels and airlines.

1. Hospitals Level

Basic measures for Hospitals

- Selecting and preparing the leadership team responsible for the program.
- Developing and creating plans and programs for emergency and disaster management to be used in each hospital.
- Full cooperation between the components of the hospital.
- Develop support training programs.
- Creating rapid response teams in the hospital and the surrounding environment.
- Setting an annual budget and securing the necessary resources for the success of the plan.
- Full cooperation between the board of directors, executive management, financial, medical and the front health care team as well the assistant staff.
- Defining an area in the hospital to be the central area for the “operating room”.
- Assigning an initial and a replacement team for each emergency response mission, with specific roles and responsibilities and related trainings.
- Assigning an internal and external contact administrator .
- External communication about hospital efforts and level of preparedness.
- Internal communication about service readiness and defining the priorities in patient admission.
- Ensuring that all communication devices are available and effective, and all contact lists are updated.
- Creating appropriate strategies for patient triage with emergency physicians, nurse practitioners, allied health professionals and other relevant staff.
- Securing that all appropriate resources are available for the triage area and team.

Recommendations

All Arabic Governments and Healthcare facilities and institutions are committed to implement the following recommendations:

1. Ensure that adequate governmental policies and regulations are established, implemented and developed for the Emergency and Disaster Management Programs.
2. Cooperate with neighboring countries or other countries in the Arab World to foster the DEPP effective and alleviate disaster impact.
3. Conduct Pan Arab Study & SWOT analysis about all dimensions related to Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plan and prepare the list of resources and points of strengths for country with respect to DEPP. The outcome of the study will help for better preparing the Arab guidelines and framework for emergency and disaster preparedness, and the list can highlight the potential aid that can provided to other countries.
4. Prepare the guidelines and the national framework which include and identify key emergency roles and responsibilities, plan ahead for safe actions and effective emergency communications, and develop strategies for resuming normal functions after emergency conditions subside.

The guideline should include the followings:

- A. Preparedness
- B. Response
- C. Recovery
- D. Risk Assessment and Planning
- E. Policies and Procedures
- F. Communication Plan
- G. Training and Testing
- H. Funding or budget

5. Allocate a yearly budget for national DEPP programs with clear and transparent financial reporting systems. A special governmental budget should be allocated for the Healthcare Sector with the required mechanism to help alleviate the impact on the hospitals and Healthcare centers.

6. Develop, coach and train multidisciplinary teams for DEPP management and recovery.
7. Create a centralized command center with clear chain of commands across all players and levels with clear roles and responsibilities for each member and center.
8. Foster the importance of Leadership development in crisis management across the DEPP program and levels.
9. Establish a national / Arab training programs for Continuing education and training as an essential component for increasing the knowledge, skills and abilities as well as competencies.
10. Establish the Arab / national data-based directory & platform and think tank to share experiences and knowledge.
11. Establish and train Rapid Response Teams whether on the national levels or in the healthcare facilities and institutions.
12. Commit the Arab Hospitals and Primary Healthcare Centers to participate in the development of the DEPP Strategic Plan for 2025.
13. Establish a national Data Analytics Center for data sharing, mining and analysis.
14. Advocate for developing new accreditation standards for each country that takes into consideration the DEPP requirements.
15. Establish related diploma and university degrees by Arab countries for DEPP.
16. Give a priority for the healthcare workers, and only second to the impacted population, for any logistical support, or in-kind or financial assistance in order for the white soldiers to provide the best possible services.

Global Strategies & Frameworks

Global strategies and frameworks

- IASC/UNDG/UNISDR Common Framework for Preparedness <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-transformative-agenda/content/commonframework-preparedness>
- International Health Regulations (2005) http://www.who.int/topics/international_health_regulations/en/
- Operational Framework for Building Climate Resilient Health Systems (WHO) <http://www.who.int/globalchange/publications/building-climate-resilient-healthsystems/en/>
- Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework http://www.who.int/influenza/resources/pip_framework/en/
- Paris Agreement with the Framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 <http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework>
- Sustainable Development Goals <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainabledevelopment-goals/>
- United National Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience (UNISDR) <http://www.preventionweb.net/publications/view/33703>
- Comprehensive Safe Hospitals Framework (WHO) http://www.who.int/hac/techguidance/comprehensive_safe_hospital_framework.pdf?ua=1
- Early Detection, Assessment and Response to Acute Public Health Events: Implementation of early warning and response with a focus on event-based surveillance (WHO)
English: http://www.who.int/ihr/publications/WHO_HSE_GCR_LYO_2014.4/en/
French: http://www.who.int/ihr/publications/WHO_HSE_GCR_LYO_2014.4/fr/
Russian: http://www.who.int/ihr/publications/WHO_HSE_GCR_LO_2014.4/ru/
Spanish: http://www.who.int/ihr/publications/WHO_HSE_GCR_LYO_2014.4/es/
- Framework for a Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (WHO) http://www.who.int/ihr/publications/9789241565134_eng/en/
- Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (WHO) http://who.int/drugresistance/global_action_plan/en/
- Recovery toolkit: Supporting countries to achieve health service resilience (WHO) <http://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/ebola/recovery-toolkit/en/>

Regional strategies

- Asia Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases (SEARO/WPRO)
www.wpro.who.int/emerging_diseases/APSED2010/en/
- Disaster Risk Management: A health sector strategy for the African Region (AFRO)
[https:// www.who.int/afro/emergencies/9789290617082/en/](https://www.who.int/afro/emergencies/9789290617082/en/)
- Europe 2020 <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-policy/health-2020-the-european-policy-for-health-and-well-being>
- Strategic Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction and Response 2013-2018: A more resilient health sector in the Americas (PAHO)
- Framework of Action for Disaster Risk Management for Health (WPRO)
<http://www.wpro.who.int/publications/9789290617082/en/>
- European Strategic Action Plan on Antibiotic Resistance <http://www.euro.who.int/en/about-us/governance/regional-committee-for-europe/past-sessions/sixty-first-session/documentation/working-documents/wd14-european-strategic-action-plan-on-antibiotic-resistance>

Arab strategies

- The 53rd session of the Arab Health Ministers Council discussing KSA Proposal for an Indicative action plan for Arab countries to confront emergencies

International initiatives

- Global Health Security Agenda
www.ghsagenda.org