



Centres supporting EHA activities

5.

Pan-African Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response⁶

Introduction

During January and February 1994, activities were channelled through the three units of the Pan-African Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, namely: (i) Emergency Preparedness and Response, (ii) Training, and (iii) Documentation and Information Dissemination. In March 1994, a joint evaluation of the Centre was undertaken by WHO/EHA in collaboration with the Government of Italy, which identified priorities and new strategies, such as institutional capacity building; focus on training in emergency preparedness and response; strengthening documentation and dissemination of information; technical support (emergency mitigation and preparedness); and health as an entry point to humanitarian action. One outcome of the evaluation was that the resources and activities of the WHO Subregional Emergency Preparedness and Response Office for Southern Africa, in Harare, Zimbabwe, were consolidated within the centre in Addis Ababa.

Training, workshops and conferences in 1994

In April 1994, in collaboration with Addis Ababa University, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the WHO Country Office, the centre organized and participated in a workshop on "Post-conflict rehabilitation of the health sector in Ethiopia and Eritrea".

Again in April, in collaboration with the United Nations Disaster Management Training Programme (UNDMTP) for Africa, the centre took part in organizing and conducting a "Workshop for African regional collaborating institutions", in Addis Ababa. Technical

briefings between UNDMTP-Africa and the centre have been maintained on a daily basis.

In May, the centre was represented at the Forty-seventh World Health Assembly and at the United Nations World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, in Yokohama, Japan.

In July, in collaboration with the Ethiopian Nutrition Institute and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the centre organized and conducted a training workshop for health managers of refugee camps, on practical approaches to nutritional problems.

In November, as a follow-up of the Yokohama Conference, the centre collaborated with DHA/IDNDR in organizing and conducting the "First subregional workshop on disaster reduction in Africa", in Gabarone, Botswana.

In December, the centre attended the "United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Experts Meeting on urban traffic safety", in Addis Ababa, and gave a presentation on road accidents involving toxic spills.

Support to EHA activities in Africa

Technical back-up was provided to EHA activities in 1994, assisting WHO country offices with documentation and technical advice. Following specific country requests, the centre's assistance included the following:

Angola. From April to July, an expert was deployed in the WHO Representative's office. Besides contributing to the Consolidated Interagency Humanitarian Assistance Appeal (see below), the expert assisted the WHO Representative in promoting initiatives for health relief and sectoral reconstruction, as well as the UN Unit for Humanitarian Assistance (UCAH), UNHCR, and UNICEF in the health aspects of their programmes, and the Ministry of Health and nongovernmental organiza-

⁶ The name of this centre changed in 1995 to the WHO Pan-African Emergency Training Centre.

tions in the response to a meningitis epidemic. An emergency preparedness and response workshop was also held for the Ministry of Health.

Botswana. In May, one consultant was funded who assisted the WHO Representative, Botswana, in collaborating with the Government and the UNDP in preparing the blueprints of the National Disaster Management Plan.

Ethiopia. The centre participated in interagency meetings of the United Nations emergency unit for Ethiopia and was represented at other relevant meetings. In October, collaboration started with the WHO country office for the preparation of a national emergency preparedness and response plan for the health sector.

Guinea. Technical and financial assistance is ongoing to the WHO country office, for the organization of the first national emergency preparedness and response workshop for Ministry of Health personnel; funds have been earmarked from EHA/HQ.

Malawi. Technical and financial assistance is ongoing to the WHO country office for the organization of the first national emergency preparedness and response workshop for the Ministry of Health personnel; funds have been earmarked from EHA/HQ.

Rwanda. From September to December, an expert was posted in the WHO Representative's office as an emergency adviser, to set in place a new computerized information system for the country's health sector.

Zimbabwe. A national programme for EHA assistance was finalized together with the WHO Representative's office, the Ministry of Health and the local government, focusing on intersectoral awareness-building, strategic planning and curriculum development, \$50 000 have been earmarked from WHO headquarters and the recruitment of a national officer is being finalized.

Interagency appeals. During 1994, the centre was involved in the preparation of two Consolidated Interagency Humanitarian Assistance Appeals for draught relief in Ethiopia and for humanitarian assistance to the peace process in Angola.

Southern Africa. Through a project for emergency preparedness and response capacity-building, which would cover countries in southern Africa for about two years, the centre contributed in mobilizing a grant of almost \$200 000 from the Government of the Netherlands, which is being channelled through EHA/HQ.

OAU. Through the WHO Representative to the Organization of African Unity (OAU), preliminary discussions were opened with OAU's Social Affairs secretariat

to provide technical assistance in strengthening OAU's capacity in disaster management.

Information and documentation

A number of technical papers were produced: (i) "The African Common Position on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction" was finalized in collaboration with the General Secretariat of the OAU. The document represented a major technical input to WHO's presentation at the United Nations World Conference in Yokohama, Japan; (ii) two draft "Emergency guidelines", aimed at the community and district levels, were prepared and submitted to WHO headquarters and the Regional Office for Africa (AFRO) for review and follow-up; (iii) "Training guidelines for disaster management" were drafted, which will serve as reference material for the Centre, as well as for other institutions interested in the health aspects of training for disaster management; (iv) a "Framework for disaster management training in the health sector" was prepared in collaboration with the WHO Representative, Angola. It consists of three modules: the continuum from relief to development; health preparedness; and preparation and implementation of projects; (v) a "Preliminary map of Africa's susceptibility to technological disasters" was produced, as a first step in identifying regional priorities and strategies in this field; and (vi) a "Glossary for technological disasters" is also being finalized, that can contribute further to this area of activity.

Furthermore, in 1994 the centre collaborated with EHA/HQ, assisting in drafting and reviewing the following: "Planning for emergencies", "International diploma course in emergency preparedness and crisis management", and "The management of nutritional emergencies in large populations". One article, "Disaster management in southern Africa", was produced for the *Hedip Forum* newsletter.

The centre is connected to the major international and regional electronic networks carrying disaster-related information. Information is stored daily on electronic and hard files and provides the basis for newsletters and information sheets.

The quarterly *Bulletin of the Centre* has been published regularly and distributed to various institutions and organizations in Africa: it carries technical information and announcements on issues related to disaster management.

A "Directory of NGOs operating in Africa" is in the process of being published, carrying NGOs' addresses

and specific roles. It aims at promoting regional capacities, facilitating liaisons with donors and the deployment of emergency resources, and, altogether, at fostering regional networking and partnerships.

A "List of participants in disaster management training in Africa, 1987-1993", was produced and circulated. It may assist in the inventory of regional human resources, and in monitoring and systematizing human resource development for disaster management.

The centre maintains a series of databases related to disaster management in Africa. Besides facilitating the centre's activities, this kind of information can help in providing services to other institutions, or even represent a marketable commodity in itself, for example: (i) a "List of focal points for disaster management in Africa" — a roster of institutions, government bodies and individuals responsible for coordinating national or subregional disaster management; (ii) "African disaster profile" — information on the occurrence and effects of disasters, that can help identify emergency preparedness and response activities that are more relevant to each country or subregion; and (iii) "African baseline indicators" — geographic, demographic, economic and health data for each African country.

Strengthening the centre's capacity

On the basis of their job descriptions, specific plans of work are being defined for all professional and general service staff of the centre. Additional equipment is being purchased through EHA/HQ that will provide material support to the human capacity and experience that the centre already has in data collection, storage, display and circulation. Within the process of consolidating the structure/administrative capacities of the centre, the library is also being reorganized, with technical assistance from the Regional Office for Africa (AFRO).

The centre is collaborating in the preparation of the

following technical documents: (i) a protocol for "Rapid assessment in complex emergencies", in collaboration with the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA, USA and the University of Hawaii (a new module being finalized, which will be included in the "Rapid assessment protocols" publication discussed earlier in Chapter 3); (ii) a position paper on "Landmines and health", as a contribution to EHA/HQ global action in this field; and (iii) a position paper on "Health, health services and conflicts in Africa", in collaboration with International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and LSHTM. Through the WHO Representative to the OAU, it is foreseen to present, at least, an introductory paper on this theme to the OAU Conference of Health Ministers, in Addis Ababa in 1995.

Three project proposals have been elaborated and submitted to WHO headquarters for review and follow-up: (i) an African Documentation Centre for Emergency Management, which, it is hoped, will attract external support in order to establish a centre *par excellence* for disaster documentation for Africa; (ii) a short course for "Training of Trainers" — the initiative would bring together for some weeks in Addis Ababa African professionals with experience in health disaster management, to become the core of the centre's roster of experts for training and programme assistance to African countries; and (iii) a study on "African NGOs and humanitarian assistance: options for WHO's new strategic alliance". It is expected that the study would produce useful indications for WHO's further action in support of regional capacities and community empowerment in emergencies.

Additionally in 1995, the centre will further focus its activities on human resources development and particularly on the very real and growing need for health emergency training for specialized national and WHO staff in disaster-affected or disaster-prone African countries.

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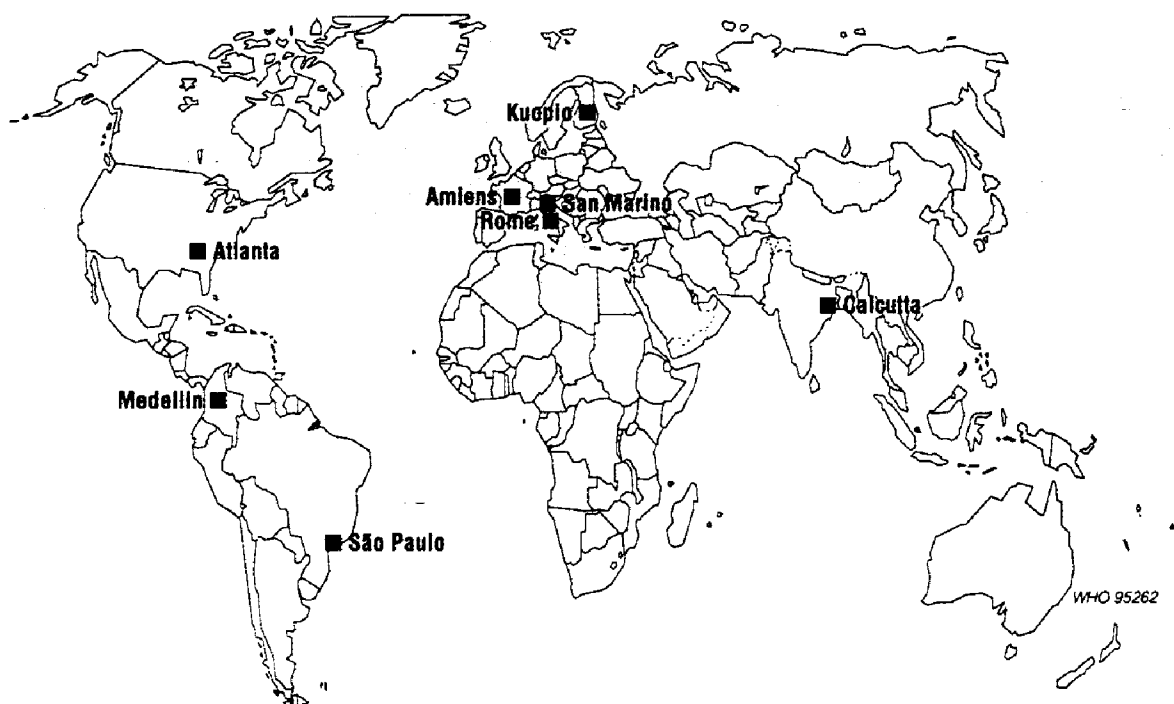
WHO Collaborating Centres

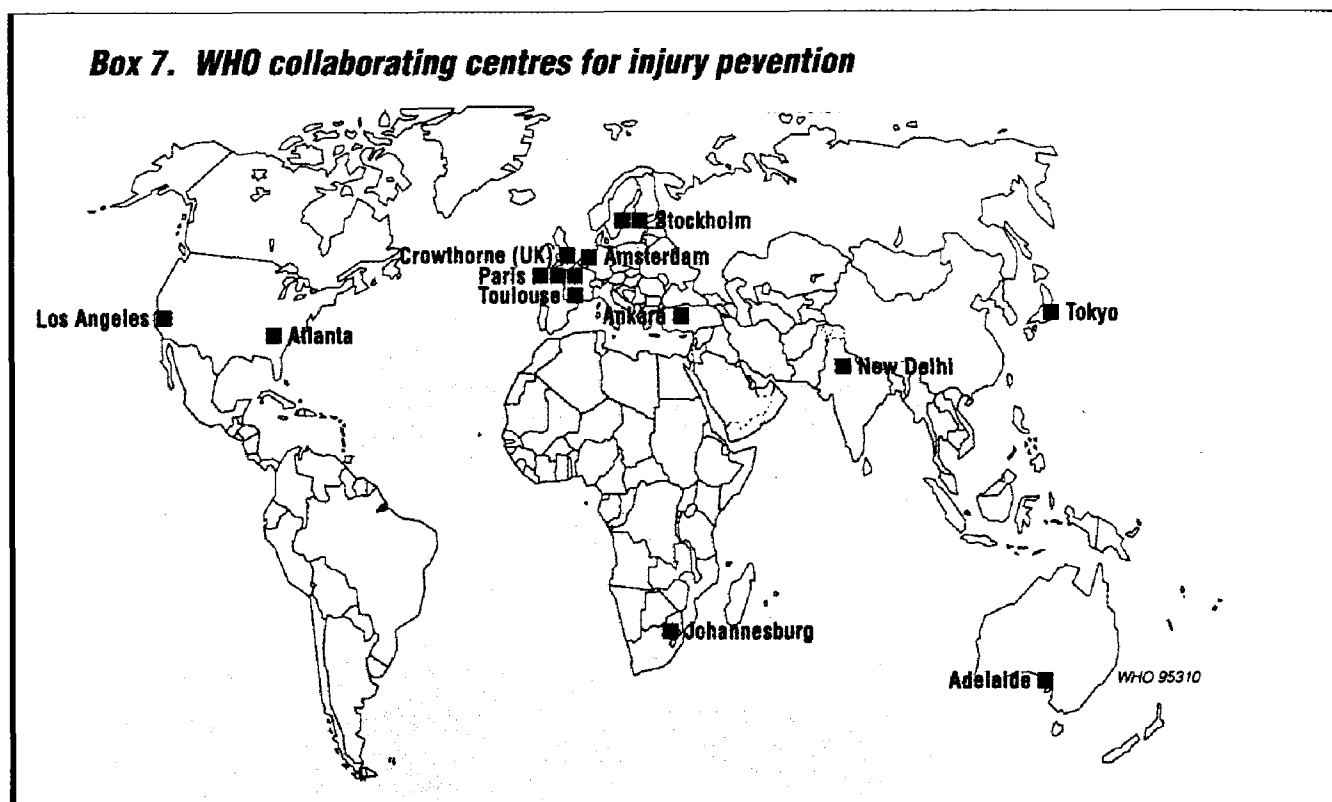
In 1994 there were eight WHO collaborating centres for emergencies and at least 15 WHO collaborating centres for injury prevention, all of whom supported, directly or indirectly, EHA activities (see Boxes 6 and 7). (For a list of addresses and telephone/fax numbers on these centres, see back cover for WHO collaborating centres for emergencies and Annex 11 for WHO collaborating centres for injury prevention.)

The *WHO collaborating centres for emergencies* are located in:

- Sao Paulo, Brazil (CETESB)
- Medellin, Colombia (University of Antioquia)
- Kuopio, Finland (FINNPREP)
- Amiens, France (Centre Hospitalier Universitaire d'Amiens)
- Calcutta, India (All-India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health)
- Rome, Italy (General Directorate for Development Cooperation)
- San Marino (European Centre for Disaster Medicine)
- Atlanta, Georgia, USA (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention)

Box 6. WHO collaborating centres for emergencies



Box 7. WHO collaborating centres for injury prevention

The WHO collaborating centres for injury prevention are located in:

- Adelaide, Australia (University of Adelaide)
- Paris, France (Club Européen de la Santé)
- Paris, France (Institut Européen des Cindyniques)
- Paris, France (Institut National de Recherche sur les Transports et leur Sécurité)
- Toulouse, France (Université Paul Sabatier)
- New Delhi, India (Indian Institute of Technology)
- Tokyo, Japan (Tokyo Women's Medical School)
- Amsterdam, The Netherlands (Consumer Safety Institute)
- Johannesburg, South Africa (University of South Africa)
- Stockholm, Sweden (Karolinska Hospital)
- Stockholm, Sweden (Karolinska Institute)
- Ankara, Turkey (Hacettepe University Medical School)
- Crowthorne, United Kingdom (Transport and Road Research Laboratory)
- Atlanta, Georgia, USA (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Los Angeles, CA, USA (UCLA School of Public Health)

What follows is a summary of activities of some of the WHO collaborating centres for emergencies.

WHO Collaborating Centre for Disaster Preparedness in the Americas

Company for Environmental Health Technology (CETESB) ***Sao Paulo, Brazil***

Objectives. The WHO Collaborating Centre for Disaster Preparedness in the Americas, also known as the Company for Environmental Health Technology (CETESB), located in Sao Paulo, Brazil, has conducted research since 1978 on the effects of industrial and vehicle emissions on environmental health. CETESB also responds to emergency requests from the community on problems stemming from accidental environmental pollution. It also deploys an "intervention team" when needed, which operates on a 24-hour basis and consists of four persons (a coordinator, a chemist, an engineer/technician, and a driver). As of 30 November 1994, CETESB had responded to 167 environmental accidents; and since it was first established, it has responded to more than 1500 environmental accidents (as of 30 December 1994).

Databases. CETESB utilizes a number of databases that it has created, including one which registers some 850 chemical substances and another on environmental accidents in the region.

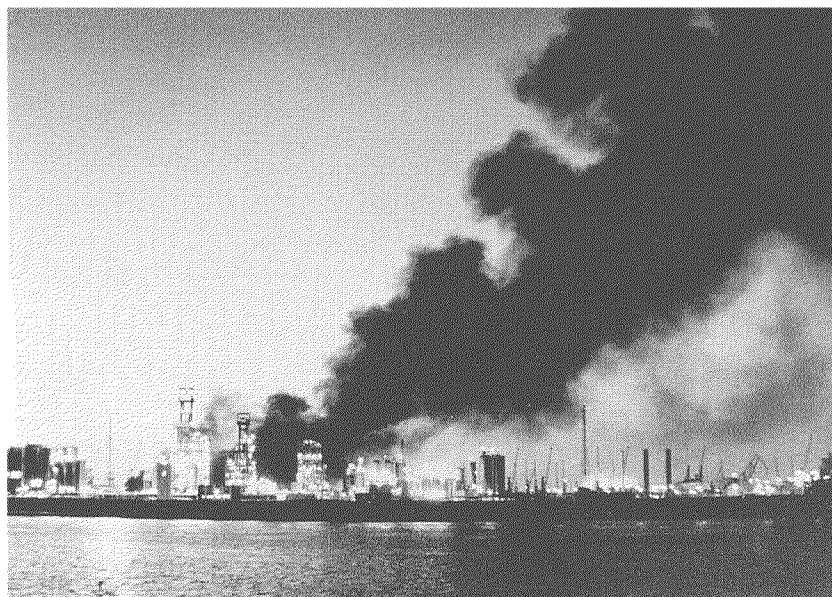
Mobile Unit for Environmental Accidents. In the event of a chemical accident, CETESB's Mobile Unit for Environmental Accidents is deployed, which consists of one vehicle, a communications system (VHF radio and *Telestrada*), chemical protective clothing and gas masks, field analysis kits, a suction vacuum system and pump, a motorboat, an electrical generator, monitoring equipment, etc. In the event of an oil spill, for example, CETESB deploys one of its three boats to the scene of the accident, and utilizes auto-inflatable containment barriers and permafex material, hydraulic/electric disk skimmers, maritime VHF communications system, and the like, to contain the spill.

Needs of the centre. In 1994 CETESB received an increasing number of inquiries for assistance, not only from the general public but from industrial and governmental agencies as well. As a consequence, there is a growing need to improve and update the exchange of technical information and to strengthen technical capacities of the centre, especially in the area of hazardous materials. Also, owing to the growing number of environmental accidents in Sao Paulo involving chemical products, including oil and its derivatives, there is an urgent need to adopt corrective and preventive measures by all parties concerned, aimed at diminishing the probability of such disasters occurring.

Conferences and training activities. CETESB participated in the following conferences and training activities in 1994: IPCS/Brazilian symposium on "Management of health aspects of chemical incidents (6-9 June); "Prevention and response to marine oil spills (20-23 June); and "Environmental accidents: prevention and control" (19-23 September); and attendance by a staff member in an international training programme in the United States (August).



Earthquakes caused immense human suffering and billions of dollars in destruction around the world in 1994. (WHO/MSF-Belgium)



Technological and chemical disasters are on the increase around the world. (WHO/Zafar)

Emergency communication system. The Civil Defense State Coordination Agency (CEDEC) set up an integrated emergency communication system in 1986, linking it with around 30 other agencies, including CETESB, the fire department, highway patrol, military and civil police, the State Water and Sewage Company, the Brazilian Chemical Manufacturers' Association, etc. The communication system is a two-digit telephone number that is connected to a network of operational centres, facilitating contact and mobilization in emergency situations, operating on a 24-hour basis.

Other activities. CETESB collaborated in several plans for mutual assistance among industries in regions such as Cubatao, Santo André, etc. CETESB believes that emer-