

10 Risk Communication Tips for International Mass-gatherings

These are recommendations from the HLM on Risk Communications for Public Health Emergencies – Risk Communication beyond the country borders held in Bangkok, Thailand, on 18-19 September 2019.

- 1** Build relations with international mass media outlets & social media influencers
- 2** Collaborate with defence, security, national intelligence and cyber-security experts against possible Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) threats, cyber-attacks, and malicious use of fake news / rumours against the country.
- 3** Build international network (e.g. with Foreign Ministries, national and international associations participating in the event, international media due to cover it etc.) ahead of the event.
- 4** Increase language translation capacity of the health authorities and other sectors that will need to interact with international visitors. Plan to have some surge capacity for translations in order to be prepared for possible PHEs.
- 5** Put in place a Health Hotline available in multiple languages and promote its use to the international visitors participating in or attending the mass gathering. Monitor this hotline and use it as an event-based surveillance mechanism.
- 6** Develop a specific PHE / all-hazards preparedness plan for the international mass gathering and test it with a SIMEX. This will help train key staff in their roles and also identify areas where the plan can be further strengthened. The plan should:
- 7** Develop communication coordination mechanism(s) with other countries and the international event organiser
- 8** Persuade authorities in other countries to take a lead in doing health communication and risk communication to their citizens (including those attending the event). Make appropriate use of the Embassies and Foreign Ministries of other countries when doing this.
- 9** Make full and appropriate use of the reporting mechanisms under WHO's International Health Regulations (IHR) for sharing information about actual or potential PHEs with other countries. In particular, make proper use of the Event Information System (EIS), and other existing networks under IHR to share evidence, information, analyses, interim risk assessments and prevention advice with other countries. This will help build trust and foster coherent and effective risk communication by all partners.
- 10** Make sure the preparedness and response system(s) you built for the mass gathering leave a legacy. There should be a plan in place to make use of key parts of the system(s) and sustain their operations on an ongoing basis once the event has finished.



Identify the lead agency and communication coordination mechanism



Provide for unified press briefings from the host country with lead spokesperson(s)



Include standard operating procedures (SOPs) for risk management and risk communication