3. Ensuring WHO is ready

WHO country office staff are on the front line of emergency response, standing shoulder to shoulder with Member States to protect health and save lives. With help from the newly revised Emergency Response Framework, WHE is working to support country office readiness.

In March, 14 heads of WHO offices from around the Region participated in an exercise to test their response to a fictional outbreak. The week before the simulation, the WHO Representative Office in Cambodia underwent intensive emergency training to increase their understanding of the Emergency Response Framework and the incident management system. The same training is now being rolled out in other country offices.

WHO country offices are also supported with rosters of deployable experts, a stockpile of emergency supplies and a new online toolkit with key emergency resources.

Country offices can also access the Contingency Fund for Emergencies to facilitate immediate response without waiting for funds to be raised. During the reporting period, the Fund kick-started responses to Tropical Cyclone Donna in Vanuatu, the Marawi conflict in the Philippines, Tropical Cyclone Gita in the Pacific and the earthquake in Papua New Guinea.

At the Regional Office, a dedicated Incident Management Support Team bringing together WHO staff from across the Division of Health Security and Emergencies and beyond is on standby to support any country office and Member State within hours of an emergency taking place. Regional Office staff also participated in a simulation exercise in January, working through the response to a fictional disaster.

Through these critical readiness measures, WHO is increasing the speed and effectiveness of emergency response to better serve Member States and the people of the Region in times of crises.