

## **Joint Statement of the WHO Collaborating Centres on Health at Mass Gatherings**

Novi Sad, Serbia  
April 5, 2013

Mass gatherings (MG) are highly visible events with the potential for serious health and political consequences if they are not managed carefully and effectively. The types of events vary, as do the capabilities and vulnerabilities of the communities in which they take place. The health implications of these events range from potential acute communicable and non-communicable disease (and injury) threats, to the potential for more sustainable positive health legacies.

In line with the WHO's Executive Board Decision of January 2012, mandating the WHO to build capacity within Member States for health at mass gatherings, a network of Collaborating Centres has been established. On 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of April 2013, representatives from the designated and potential collaborating centres from five countries across three regions and representatives from the WHO Country Office, Serbia, WHO Regional Office for Europe and WHO Headquarters, gathered in Novi Sad, Serbia. The aim of this meeting was to refine their objectives and strengthen cohesion within the network, to define priorities in mass gathering health development and to establish a network strategy for taking this work forward.

The outcome of the two day meeting was a commitment from collaborating centres to work together to advance the science and practice of mass gathering health. Specific priorities for the network were identified, including work to revise WHO's advice for health at mass gatherings, definition of a framework for building health legacy, advocacy for health at mass gatherings and refinement of the available educational and training materials.

The WHO collaborating centre network will work closely with existing technical mass gatherings networks and across regions, to improve health at mass gatherings and to ensure a positive health legacy from these events.

### **Proposed Members of the WHO Collaborating Centre network:**

- Disaster Research Centre, Flinders University, Australia
- Public Health England, United Kingdom
- National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD), South Africa
- Institute of Public Health of Vojvodina, Serbia
- School of Public Health, University of Washington, United States of America
- Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia