

Dear Colleagues/GOARN Focal Point

Please find below information regarding forthcoming training for field team leaders during WHO/GOARN responses to outbreaks. The focal point for the development of this training course is Dr Dominique Legros at WHO/HQ.

Training for field team leaders during WHO/GOARN responses to outbreaks Since April 2000, WHO has coordinated and supported the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN). This partnership with key institutions around the world has provided the framework to mobilize and connect resources for the control of known and emerging disease outbreaks which have threatened national and global health security.

Over the last five years, the partnership has responded to over 50 events of international importance in some 40 countries and mobilized over 400 experts. In March last year, GOARN endorsed a strategic plan to ensure the Network continues operating effectively and with the capacity to deliver its primary aims.

Strong technical and operational leadership in the field has been repeatedly identified as a critical element in providing effective and coordinated support to national outbreak response efforts. In an attempt to improve this situation, WHO is organizing an intensive training course for future Outbreak Response Team Leaders.

The course will assist the formation of a cadre of highly-experienced field team leaders for WHO/GOARN outbreak response missions. The course is envisaged as the first of a number of such training sessions. The first session is planned from 25 to 30 September 2005 in Geneva, Switzerland. The course will allow participants to develop the skills required to manage WHO/GOARN outbreak response teams in the field in the context of support to countries. The curriculum will address the role of the international team leader in many areas of outbreak response, including: team management, administration, communication and logistics, personal and mission security, medical emergencies and evacuation procedures, research and ethical issues, social mobilization and risk communications, and the role of the media. The course will incorporate practical exercises on decision-making, communication, conflict resolution and team building in an attempt to simulate the conditions of outbreak response.

To build the capacity of the Network, this course is offered to experts in GOARN partner institutions and to staff at WHO working directly in the area of international epidemic alert and response.

We would be grateful for your assistance in identifying experienced staff from your region who would be interested to participate in this course, and who you wish to propose for consideration. Please note that only individuals with relevant experience in outbreak response field missions will ultimately be selected and that a commitment by the institution to make the individual available to lead a team for up to four weeks in the field will be required.

***The following outline of professional background, skills and abilities, and languages are offered to guide consideration of potential candidates:***

### 1. Professional background

Public health professional with at least five years of relevant field experience in developing countries

Experience in management / coordination of field response in emergency or outbreak situations (this should not be limited to programme administration at headquarters)

Experience in conducting initial field assessments.

### 2. Skills

Understanding of working in a multi-disciplinary multi-cultural team and with national counterparts Excellent interpersonal and communication skills

Ability to assume authority as and when needed

Ability to work effectively under stress and in conditions of extreme hardship, with minimum guidance and support

Ability to build and maintain harmonious working relationships, coordinate different elements of outbreak response operations and provide leadership in achieving priority goals

Ability to analyse rapidly changing situations, digest technical and political issues and take responsibility for prioritizing action

Ability to present relevant information in a focus, concise and effective way both orally and in written Working knowledge of computer applications and telecommunication technologies

### 3. Languages

Speak and write English fluently

Knowledge of additional languages, particularly the working languages of the UN system. We have developed the course content and selected the location for the course on the basis of 15 to 20 participants. In the event that highly suitable candidates are unavailable for the dates of this first course they could be considered for future sessions to be organized next year.

All costs will be supported by HQ (travel, accommodation, per-diem).

**Please provide details of candidates to [goarn@who.int](mailto:goarn@who.int) <mailto:goarn@who.int> quoting the same subject line. Many thanks for your cooperation is this.**

On behalf of the GOARN Steering Committee (SCOM) and WHO Operational Support Team, WHO/HQ, Geneva

Yours sincerely

Dr Ron St John

Chairperson, SCOM