



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Executive Summary

The GHSA Meeting on the Progress & Ways forward for the Regional Strategic Frameworks in Animal & Human Health on Workforce Development

13-15 March 2018, Bangkok, Thailand

The Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) aims to strengthen both the global and national capacity to prevent, detect and respond to human and animal infectious diseases threats through a multilateral and multi-sectoral approach. Taking the roles of a leading country for two crucial GHSA action packages, including Detect 1 National Laboratory System and Detect 5 Workforce Development, Thailand has been working closely with countries in the Asia Pacific Region, and leading and contributing countries of the respective action packages since 2015.

In accordance with the GHSA 2017 Kampala Declaration, the GHSA Steering Group has been working to develop a framework for the next five years, termed “GHSA 2024.” The GHSA 2024 framework provides a high-level view of the context for the goals and objectives in 2019-2024 and an outline to operate and track progress towards the goals.

In light of serving the purposes of the GHSA 2024 as well as expediting the epidemiological workforce development towards global health security, “*the GHSA Meeting on the Progress and Ways forward for the Regional Strategic Frameworks in Animal and Human Health on Workforce Development*” was held on 13-15 March 2019 in Arnoma Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting aimed to summarize the progress of action items under the workforce development action package based on the Regional Strategic Framework for Public Health Workforce Development and Systems Strengthening on Epidemiology (2016-2020), share experiences of effective implementation of workforce development, and explore the direction for the workforce development action package (2020-2024) as well as the future collaboration.

A total of eighteen delegates from eleven countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand) participated in the meeting, including seven delegates from animal health sector and eleven representatives from human health sector. The delegate from the Netherlands represented the Chair of the GHSA Steering Group, and delegates from two contributing countries of the workforce development action package, namely Saudi Arabia and United States of America, were also engaged in the meeting activities. A total of twenty five participants from eleven international development partners also exhibited strong support through active engagement in the meeting. In addition, the meeting was fortified by forty three Thai participants from the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives as well as the Ministry of Public Health.

On 13 March 2019, the meeting started with an overview of GHSA with background and 2024 framework. The results of joint external evaluation on workforce development and national laboratory system were updated to the participants. Furthermore, animal and human health representatives from Malaysia, China, Thailand and Cambodia also shared the experiences of workforce development following the strategies of the Regional Strategic Framework for Public Health Workforce Development and Systems Strengthening on Epidemiology.

As per the survey results distributed prior to the meeting and posters displayed in the meeting, the achievements and challenges of workforce development in the countries were summarized and presented. Key challenges identified by the human health sector were lack of incentives to retain human resources in the field, inadequate number of workforce, and policy structure that hindered human resources management while the animal health sector identified a lack of resources and diverse capacity and interest of different program designs among all related agencies as important challenges. Hence, developing advocacy package for leadership, redefining scope of workforce development to include frontline health care workers, engaging private sector, sharing workforce strategies, impact stories of FETP on GHSA portal, and ensuring products that have successfully addressed public health problems were recommended.

Through intensive and fruitful discussions on 14 March 2019, the draft GHSA workforce development action package was formulated with defined target, desired impacts, 5-year action items, monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment, and roles of participating countries.

The ways forward for intercountry collaboration and partnership for workforce development was conceptualized through the World Café brainstorming session on 15 March 2019, corresponding to the inputs for future collaboration after 2020, which can be summarized as follows:

- Develop and implement national plan, institutionalize training programs into government structure with clear career path setting,
- Increase the number of field epidemiology workforces at all levels,
- Advocate policy makers at all levels to exercise evidence-based decision making with full support on all training programs,
- Increase the number of field epidemiology mentors by training of trainers or exchanging trainers (leading country),
- Conduct joint field activities between animal and human health sectors, and
- Promote and share epidemiology publications to other countries.

Moreover, implementation of workforce development strategy and plan is one of the main action items in the GHSA workforce development action package. While the surveys from the previous meetings revealed that the national strategic plan for workforce development in epidemiology was not enforced for most of the countries in the regions, “*the GHSA Workshop on Strategic Plan for Workforce Development*” was organized on 15 March 2019 for half day in order to galvanize the development of the national strategic plan for workforce development in the countries. The workshop highlighted the benefits, barriers, elements of strong execution, stakeholder engagement through energetic discussions and exercises.

Both the aforementioned activities were convened by the Department of Disease Control under the Ministry of Public Health, in close collaboration with the Department of Livestock Development under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Thailand. The Thailand GHSA Regional Coordinating Office affiliated under the Bureau of Epidemiology acted as a secretariat. The activities were achieved through the support of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US CDC).
