WHO Report to 46th RASSC Meeting
Vienna, Austria 24-26 June 2019

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT WHO
The World Health Organization (WHO) is the coordinating authority for global public health work within the United Nations system. WHO headquarters is located in Geneva, Switzerland. There are 6 WHO regions, each with a regional office. In addition, WHO has 149 field offices in countries, territories or areas. Countries without a WHO office are covered by nearby field offices or by the appropriate regional office. WHO governing body is the World Health Assembly (WHA), made up of delegates from the 194 WHO Member States. For more information see WHO website1.

2. RECENT AND UPCOMING WHO’s ACTIVITIES RELEVANT FOR RASSC

2.1 Radon and NORM exposures
WHO continues working to support its Member States for the implementation of international standards for radiation protection in existing exposure situations. WHO is coordinating the RADON listserv, a platform for sharing radon-related information (e.g. health research, resources, legislation, policies, upcoming meetings) which gathers 300 participants from over 50 countries. WHO has cooperated with IAEA on a number of radon-related activities (e.g. joint organization of webinars). WHO organized a side event on radon at the First WHO Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health (Geneva, Switzerland, November 2018). WHO is an observer organization on the EC Article 31 Working Party on exposure to natural sources of ionizing radiation (WP NAT). WHO is also an observer organization in the recently established HERCA working group on natural radiation sources (WGNAT) and participated at the 3rd WGNAT meeting (Dublin, March 2019). WHO has developed a survey of radon regulations and policies which has been distributed to all WHO regions, and whose results will be published on WHO Global Health Observatory. WHO has provided comments to the UNSCEAR report on “Lung Cancer from Exposure to Radon”.

2.2. Radioactivity in food and drinking water
WHO continued disseminating its guidance document to support countries in the interpretation and use of the WHO Guidelines on Drinking Water Quality (GDWQ)2. WHO is cooperating with FAO and IAEA in a project on Natural Radionuclides in Food3 as a member of the project Steering Group (SG). WHO performed a dietary exposure assessment for various natural radionuclides in food and continues contributing to this SG to undertake an evaluation of data collected from countries and literature review. WHO collaborated with the IAEA for the organization and delivery of a meeting on Technical Challenges in Developing Guidance on Radioactivity in Food and Drinking Water in Non-Emergency Situations (Xi’an, China, November 2018).

2.3 Medical exposure
Under the framework of its Global Initiative on Radiation Safety in Health Care Settings4 WHO is cooperating with the IAEA to support the implementation of the Bonn Call for Action (BCfA), including the contribution to regional radiation safety campaigns (e.g. Eurosaf, Afrosaf, ArabSafe, LatinSafe). WHO cooperates with the IAEA, IOMP and IRPA are conducting a joint project for strengthening Radiation Safety Culture in Health Care (RSCCH) and co-organized a joint workshop on RSCCH (San Diego, USA, February 2019). WHO continued working on a project to improve justification and clinical governance of the use of CT in asymptomatic people and is co-sponsoring the 7th

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1 More information at http://www.who.int/about/en/
3 The IAEA is providing the Secretariat for this project, which was started in response to the IAEA General Conference Resolution GC(61)/RES/8.
International Conference on Preventing Overdiagnosis-POD2019 to be held in Sydney, Australia in December 2019. WHO contributed to an IAEA Technical Meeting on Radiation Exposure of Patients from Recurrent Radiological Imaging Procedures (Vienna, Austria, March 2019). WHO continued working to improve radiation benefit-risk dialogue in healthcare settings, including provision of guidance for health professionals and information materials for patients and families5. The Portuguese edition of a WHO guidance document on radiation risk communication was launched at a symposium hosted by the Coimbra Health School (Coimbra, Portugal, December 2018). The Spanish Edition of this document was presented at a Special Session during the 6th Joint Congress of the Spanish Society of Radiation Protection/SEPR and Spanish Society of Medical Physics/SEFM (Burgos, Spain, June 2019).

WHO cosponsored the II Workshop on Optimization and Justification in Radiology for Portuguese-speaking countries (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, October 2018). WHO participates as observer in the HERCA Working Group on Medical Applications, observer in the Euratom Art 31 Working Party on Medical Exposures, member of the advisory group of the European Study on Clinical DRLs for Medical Imaging (EUCLID) and special advisor in the Stakeholders’ Board of the European project on implications of medical low dose radiation exposure (MEDIRAD).

2.4 Emergency Preparedness and Response

WHO continues working to support the implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR-2005) and strengthen national capacities for radiation emergency preparedness and response (EPR). WHO’s EPR-related activities are supported by specialized global expert networks- i.e. Radiation Emergency Medical Preparedness and Assistance Network (REMPAN)6, WHO Global Network of Biodosimetry Laboratories (BioDoseNet)7, WHO-FAO joint network of national food safety authorities (INFOSAN)8 and Public Health Emergency Operations Centres Network (EOC-NET)9. Information about WHO EPR-related work is periodically summarized at the REMPAN e-Newsletters10. As a member of the Inter-Agency Committee on Radiological and Nuclear Emergencies (IACRNE)11, WHO works in close cooperation with the international organizations which are members of this committee, as well as with relevant networks and regional structures (e.g. HERCA Working Group on Emergencies/VGE, European platforms and networks such as NERIS, EURADOS, EAN, EUROSAFE, RENEB, EBMT, and others). WHO is developing a framework for managing mental health impact of nuclear emergencies. The on-going work of the WHO in radiation EPR, including the development of the framework document was presented at the International Symposium of Radiation Medical Science Center of Fukushima Medical University: Build Back Better: from the World to Fukushima, from Fukushima to the World (Fukushima, Japan, January 2019); the HERCA WGE meeting (Rome, Italy, March 2019); the meeting of the Committee on Radiological Protection and Public Health (CRPPH) of the NEA/OECD CRPPH (Paris, France, March 2019); the 17th NERIS workshop (Roskilde, Denmark, April 2019) and the SHAMISEN-SING stakeholders workshop (Oslo, Norway, May 2019).

2.5 Inter-Agency Cooperation

WHO is a member organization of the Inter-Agency Committee on Radiological and Nuclear Emergencies (IACRNE) and the Inter-Agency Committee on Radiation Safety (IACRS) and in this capacity has contributed to the work of these two committees. On 12-14 June, 2019 the WHO hosted the 27th IACRNE meeting, with participation of 12 international organizations, that discussed strengthening international cooperation on the EPR area and agreed on the IACRNE work plan for the next two years. WHO is hosting the 20th Regular Meeting of the IACRS (Geneva, Switzerland, July 2019). WHO is an observer organization at IAEA RASSC, IAEA EPRESCE, UNSCEAR, OECD/NEA CRPPH, and EURATOM Art 31 Group of Experts and, in this capacity, WHO was represented at relevant meetings of these bodies that were held during the reported period. WHO is cosponsoring the 15th International IRPA Congress (Seoul, South Korea, May 2020), is contributing as member of the congress programme committee and as member of the congress support committees.

8 More information about INFOSAN at the WHO website http://www.who.int/foodsafety/areas_work/infosan/en/.
9 More information about EOC-NET at the WHO website https://www.who.int/hr/hr/EOC_NET/en/.
11 More information about IACRNE at the IAEA website https://www.iaea.org/topics/international-arrangements.