



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USPACOM International Disease Surveillance Conference
Kurumba, Maldives
13-15 September 2011

From 13-15 September, 2011, the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center (AFHSC), collaborating with the Center for Disaster and Humanitarian Assistance Medicine (CDHAM), the Naval Environmental Preventive Medicine Unit 6 (NEPMU-6), and the United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) held the International Disease Surveillance Conference. This 3 day conference was hosted by the Maldives National Defense Force and the Maldives Ministry of Health.

This conference aimed to enhance regional collaboration in regards to disease surveillance and detection capacity; improve the regional disease surveillance network; and provide a venue to share priorities, successes, and challenges in infectious disease surveillance.

Specific objectives of the conference included:

- Discuss current national surveillance systems, including strengths, limitations, needs, current infrastructure, and examples of recent detection of outbreaks.
- Share methods for incorporating laboratory, pharmacy, and clinical reporting elements into surveillance systems.
- Learn about methods for assessing the effectiveness of disease surveillance systems.
- Share social, cultural and environmental considerations in surveillance methods.

The conference included a total of approximately 50 distinguished participants and lecturers from the Maldives, Bangladesh, Nepal, Indonesia, Laos, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, China, and the United States. Subject matter experts from the AFHSC, CDHAM, NEPMU-6, USPACOM, Naval Medical Research Unit 2, the Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Science, the U.S. Army Public Health Command, the World Health Organization, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention presented on topics relevant to international disease surveillance.

Individuals from each of the countries were invited to present on their country's diseases of concern and provide a brief outline of their country's disease surveillance system. Highlights from these presentations included an outbreak of Chikungunya in the Maldives, dengue outbreaks in the Philippines and the Maldives, outbreaks of Nipah virus in Bangladesh, and the intricacies of the internet-based notifiable disease surveillance system of China, one of the largest disease surveillance systems in the world. The conference incorporated break-out groups with facilitated discussions on lab elements; hospital, clinical, and pharmacology elements; and information management as they relate to disease surveillance.

Participants identified existing gaps in their current civilian and military disease surveillance systems, discuss previous infectious disease outbreaks for lessons learned in terms of surveillance, and build relationships with their regional counterparts. The conference also provided a unique opportunity for US military organizations to network and build fruitful partnerships with the South and Southeast Asian partner nations in attendance, to continue such collaborations in the future.