



2 December 2011



Joint Statement

The flood situation in Thailand is largely abating. Although stagnant water remains in some areas, the water level has significantly receded, and in most flood-affected provinces the situation is returning to normal. The Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) has found that disease outbreaks and other health threats related to the flood were not as high as anticipated. Hence, Thailand is now entering into the restoration phase. The Ministry is in the process of restoring the health system, particularly in the affected areas, to full normal function.

During the flood crisis, the MOPH adjusted its medical and public health services including disease surveillance and control systems to cope with the emergency situation as follows:

- Mobilised medical teams, nurses and medical equipment from unaffected provinces to assist health facilities of affected provinces. Set up mobile medical units to provide care both physically and mentally for flood victims in temporary shelters and for victims that remained at home. This is to ensure the continuity of necessary medical care.
- Initiated supplemental disease surveillance to quickly find patients who might need care in the shelters and in the community, and to monitor the health situation in affected populations.
- Dispatched rapid response teams to investigate reported outbreaks, implement prevention and control measures, communicate risks and methods of self-protection, and improve sanitation and vector control, as well as to ensure food safety and safe drinking water at shelters and in the community.

In all of these activities, the MOPH has been receiving full support from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Thailand MOPH-US CDC Collaboration Centre, both of which have been working in long-standing partnership with the Ministry. Furthermore, other international organizations and many countries have also provided medical equipment and supplies as well as invaluable technical support.

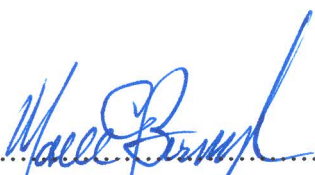
Thailand's disease surveillance data showed that the most common illnesses in affected populations were athlete's foot, upper respiratory tract infection, conjunctivitis and food poisoning. These illnesses were mostly found in the shelters and were quickly managed. Overall rates for these conditions were not much different from seasonal occurrence in previous years. Most deaths

associated with the flood were due to accidents, especially drowning and electrocutions. Importantly, no major disease outbreaks were detected during the flood.

The MOPH has summarised the health situation and key activities during the flood crisis and posted them on its Thai-language website <http://www.moph.go.th> and <http://www.boe.moph.go.th> along with an English version, written in collaboration with the WHO and the Thailand MOPH-US CDC Collaboration at <http://www.ddc.moph.go.th>.

The MOPH is now working to restore Thailand's health infrastructure and services in the flood-hit provinces with special emphasis on full recovery of health facilities to provide physical and mental care especially to vulnerable populations. The restoration process will aim to "build back better" by incorporating disaster risk reduction measures to build resiliency for the future. The Ministry will also maintain disease surveillance, disease prevention and control systems; and improve the quality of food and drinking water, cleanliness of markets, quality of tap water, environmental hygiene, sanitation and waste management. This will be accomplished through close collaboration between health officials, village health volunteers and local administrative bodies, to restore the community's health back to normal as soon as possible.

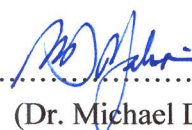
Despite its impacts on health, the flood crisis has presented the MOPH with an opportunity to strengthen its collaboration with all related agencies and its health system while also innovating new and better approaches which could be used as the basis for disaster preparedness, response and quick recovery in future events.



(Dr. Maureen Birmingham)
WHO Representative
to Thailand



(Dr. Paijit Warachit)
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Public Health
of Thailand



(Dr. Michael D. Malison)
Director of Thailand
MOPH - U.S.
CDC Collaboration