

PRESS RELEASE

07 April 2011

**NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT AND
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES DURING DISASTERS
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During his inaugural address at a “National Workshop on Psycho-Social Support and Mental Health Services during Disasters” organized by the National Disaster Management Authority on 07 April 2011, Shri M Shashidhar Reddy, Vice Chairman, NDMA emphasized on the aspect of need for Psycho-Social Support and Mental Health Services during disasters. He highlighted the salient points of the Guidelines on Psycho-Social Support and Mental Health Services during Disasters already released by NDMA in January 2010.

NDMA has so far released 27 Guidelines on management of natural and man-made disasters and also cross cutting issues like Medical Preparedness and Mass Casualty Management etc. “There has been a lot of appreciation about these both within the country and outside”, he said and added, “it is now time for monitoring the implementation of these Guidelines, which is very crucial”. Saying that implementation of the guidelines is a difficult task, he called upon Ministries and Departments of Government of India and the States to prepare implementation plans based on the guidelines.

Shri Reddy highlighted the shortage of Mental Health Manpower in India. “We are far behind the world average in manpower for the mental health, be it be number of psychiatrists, Psychologists or Psychiatric Nurses. We have only 0.2 psychiatrists per one lakh population, whereas the World average in 1.20. Similarly, the World average for Psychologists and Psychiatric Nurses is 0.6 and 0.4 respectively, whereas, India has only 0.03 for both”, he pointed out. He emphasized upon the need for evolving our own model based on the socio-economic conditions of the Country to meet these shortages.



He urged the participants to assess the progress made in the implementation of the guidelines so far and prepare a road map to cover the implementation strategy in three phases, as contemplated in the guidelines. “A country with more than 1.2 billion people, with lots of experience and expertise, cannot become an economic super power without extending Psycho-Social Support and Mental Health Services in disasters, which are only bound to increase in the coming years”, he said.

Maj Gen (Dr) J K Bansal, VSM, Chikitsa Rattan (Retd), Member, NDMA, presided over the inaugural session. Dr. V M Katoch, Secretary, Department of Health Research & Director General, ICMR, also put the need for providing such services by giving an example of the trauma of Bhopal Gas Tragedy survivors. Mr. David Mcloughlin, National Convener, United Nations Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) & Deputy Representative (Programmes), UNICEF –India appreciated the initiatives taken so far by the NDMA and reiterated the need for more collaborative and coordinated steps with NDMA. Dr. Noor Mohammed, Secretary, NDMA, Shri Sunik Kohli, Financial Adviser, NDMA and other Officials of NDMA were also present in this inaugural session. This workshop was attended by a number of eminent doctors and specialists in this field.