STRATEGIC TOOL FOR ASSESSING THE RISK WRITE UP

On Monday, April 10, 2023, the work of the health risk assessment workshop using the STAR tool opened for a period of five days in Douala. Organized by the National Public Health Observatory (NPHO) with the support of the WHO, the overall objective was to strengthen the capacities of Cameroonian experts from the different sectors as *Public Health, Environment, National security, civil society, mining sector in* to prepare and response to multi-risk emergencies encompassing the dangers of different orders, the STAR tool developed by the WHO and made available to its Member States.

What is the STAR tool?

STAR (Strategic Tool for Assessing the Risk) is a tool developed by the WHO and used to support its member states in identifying public health threats, assessing their level of risk and guiding preparedness activities for the response to public health emergencies.

It is based on the following principles , which should allow the country to take ownership of the results of the risk assessment:

- **Multi-Sector Participation** Doing risk assessment is an inclusive activity that ensures the participation of all relevant sectors to ensure an all-hazards approach.
- **The reliability of the data and information available.** This includes monitoring data, historical data, forecasts, modeling data, and information on available policy and operational tools.
- **The experience of national experts** , in that they help to compensate for data and information limitations
- **Transparency** , through openness and sincerity in the sharing of data and information between actors;
- **The good understanding of the concepts** by the actors of the different sectors.

STAR tool , the facilitators wanted to demonstrate the STAR tool from the Excel matrix, which is a workbook with sheets that constitute the manipulation methods of the files housed there, for adequate transferability of information to the compilation unit. It appears that the Excel workbook on which the groups will be called upon to work is made up of nine sheets, including the " **Data Input" sheet** which is the only one that the participants will be called upon to fill in, the others updating automatically to visualization . Inside this sheet are the following headings:

- **Identification of hazards:** This step includes the sub-group of hazards, which automatically generates the type of hazard, and the hazard itself taken as a hazard.
- **Exposure:** This involves estimating the population at risk, ie the number of people likely to be exposed to the hazard and its consequences on health, as well as the geographical location of the risk being assessed.
- **Probability:** This step includes defining the frequency of the hazard, defining the seasonality of the hazard and determining the probability of occurrence, this on the basis of classifications already defined in drop-down menus.
- **Determination of the impact:** Still based on an already predefined hierarchical classification, this step includes the definition of the frequency of the danger, the definition of the seasonality of the danger and the determination of the probability.

At the end of the presentation relating thereto and that of the detailed matrix of the risks proposed so far, the participants were invited to complete the list in plenary, before proceeding to the prioritization of these, in order to retain only about twenty which would serve as a base for the continuation of the work in the matrix. It is necessary to point out that in order to have fair and reliable data, the choice of risks must be motivated by the ability to directly influence lethality, mortality and to cause the activation of the Emergency Operations Coordination Center of Public Health (EOCCPH).

After completing the imput sheet the data automatically folds into the STAR- CMR matrix ; it was distributed.

It should be noted that the STAR tool is effective in strengthening any element of advocacy regarding public health risks and other hazards that may trigger a country emergency.