


Health Action in Crises (WHO/HAC) Highlights - No 24: Monday, 30 August 2004

The WHO/HQ Department for Health Action in Crises aims to produce a running note on select current issues at weekly intervals. This note—which is by no means exhaustive—is designed for internal use and does not reflect the official position of WHO.

<p>SUDAN</p>  <p>The map shows Sudan with its capital Khartoum and other major cities like Wadī Halfā, Port Sudan, Sawākin, Atbara, Kasala, Omdurman, Wadī Madani, Al Fāshir, Al Ubayyiq, Kusti, Al Qadārif, Nyala, Malakāl, Wāw, Bor, Juba, and Nimrī. Neighboring countries include Libya, Egypt, Chad, C.A.R., Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya. The Red Sea is to the east. A scale bar indicates 300 km.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">DARFUR CRISIS</p> <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 22 May and 20 August 2004, 2,431 cases and 41 deaths of suspected Hepatitis E were reported in Darfur through the WHO-instigated Early Warning Alert and Response Network (EWARN). • Following the confirmation of three new cases of polio in the Darfur, the second round of the mop-up Polio campaign started on 28 August in all Darfur states and West Kordofan. The campaign is targeting 1.4 million children aged under five and should end today (30 August). The first round was conducted on 28 July. • Cold chain supplies and vaccines are being pre-positioned and vaccinators are being trained for the September measles vaccination campaign in Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) areas. Vaccination teams will also provide Primary Health Care kits and nutritional supplements during the campaign. • MSF-France released findings from their 26-29 June survey conducted among Internally Displaced Persons living in 12 camps in and around El Geneina. Findings include a severe acute malnutrition prevalence of 5.5% and a global malnutrition prevalence of 25.5%. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to the Hepatitis E outbreak, WHO continues to support chlorination, soap distribution and hygiene promotion activities throughout Darfur. In addition, WHO is hosting outbreak control meetings with WatSan representatives from the State Ministries of Health (SMOH), UN agencies, and NGOs. • WHO and other health actors are drafting plans of work for the rehabilitation of four hospitals in South Darfur. • As the risk of cholera outbreaks remains elevated, WHO is preparing an inventory of cholera preparedness materials in the three Darfur states. • The survey of current levels of crude mortality—conducted by the European Programme for Intervention Epidemiology Training (EPIET) and supported by WHO, the MOH and partners—is underway. Preliminary analyses are due in early October. • WFP, with support from WHO, UNICEF, FAO, and the Centres for Disease Control, is planning a food security and nutritional survey in camps where they have provided food assistance. Commencing 30 August, the survey includes a component that will examine Under-5 deaths in the past six months. • Funding for WHO humanitarian operations in Darfur has been provided by African Development Bank (AfDB), UK's Department for International Development (DfID), and the governments of Netherlands, Italy, Ireland, Norway and United States.
<p>IRAQ</p>	<p>Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehabilitation of the Public Health Laboratories in Baghdad, Najaf and Mosul, as well as the Nursing Training Centres in Baghdad, Basra and Suleimaniya, continues. • Fogging activities for Malaria and Leishmaniasis are ongoing in all governates. • Six-hundred packs of Tuberculin diagnostic kits and 20 Hepatitis E diagnostic kits arrived in Amman for subsequent delivery to Baghdad. • An increase of the incidence of seasonal water-borne diseases—including diarrhoea and cholera—has been reported. • The security situation continues to impede the mobility of health workers and to block people's access to health care. It has also resulted in shortages of medicines and medical supplies.

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Actions

- MOH Kimadia has received two WHO-procured shipments of medicines and medical supplies. The shipments constitute part of WHO's emergency procurement of 21 urgently needed medicines and medical supplies at the request of the MOH. An additional two shipments have arrived in Amman and will be transported to Baghdad by road.
- WHO, at the request of the MOH, shipped to Baghdad 1,000 doses of anti-diphtheria toxin and 24 external fixators. The MOH will deliver these to the emergency orthopaedic units of Najaf hospitals.
- WHO has completed 80% of the rehabilitation project of the Central Public Health Laboratory in Baghdad.
- In preparation for the second round of Malaria and Leishmaniasis spraying campaigns in all governorates, WHO is providing technical and logistic support.
- WHO provided medical oxygen to the 12 hospitals in Ninawa Governorate, with an average daily supply of 225 cylinders.
- Current WHO humanitarian actions in Iraq are made possible through funding by ECHO and UNDG.

WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP



Events:

- The Mental Health anti-stigma campaign is now underway in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The campaign is backed by the Ministry of Health, WHO, and other health actors.

Actions:

- WHO started the implementation of the Mental Health anti-stigma campaign with a distribution of 15,000 copies of "Mental Health for All; it's time to change our attitudes towards mentally ill people" and the broadcast of anti-stigma campaign messages via radio.
- WHO held a district emergency health coordination meeting in Salfit (district located in the north of the West Bank with 60,000 inhabitants) to assess the impact of movement restrictions caused by checkpoints in the area and the construction of the separation barrier.
- Current WHO humanitarian actions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been made possible by 2004 funding from USAID, AGFUND, and the Government of Norway, as well as pre-2004 funding from ECHO.



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SOMALIA



Events:

- Deteriorating food security has resulted in high malnutrition levels and child mortality rates in both southern and northern Somalia. (Source: IRIN)
- On 20 August, the authority of Somaliland declared the regions of Sool, Sanag, and Togdeer as drought-affected areas and appealed for immediate humanitarian assistance. The UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia is urging all UN agencies to join forces to mitigate the situation, inclusive of emerging health hazards.
- According to the WFP, environmental degradation resulting from a prolonged drought in northern and north-eastern Somalia is threatening to destroy the livelihoods of an estimated 120,000 livestock rearers. The four-year drought has also affected 480,000 other people in central and southern Somalia who are now in need of food aid.

Actions:

- WHO is closely monitoring the evolving drought situation in Somalia and its health implications. It is also working to raise awareness among the international humanitarian community.
- WHO is making available cash for the local procurement of medicines and supplies, as well as procuring six New Emergency Health Kits, each containing basic drugs, medical supplies and equipment for a population of 10,000 persons for three months.

INTER-AGENCY INITIATIVES

- **Bangladesh.** WHO will participate in the OCHA information meeting on the United Nations Flash Appeal for the Bangladesh Floods on 31 August. The WHO component of the Flash Appeal is US\$11.6 million. Monies will go towards providing essential drugs, supplies, transportation, and medical equipment; replacing damaged evacuating assets; and deploying rapid health assessment teams.
- **Burundi.** WHO will participate in the Consolidated Appeals Process Workshop in Bujumbura from 1-3 September.
- **Sudan.**
 - On 30 August, WHO is attending an inter-agency luncheon in New York to discuss input to the draft Secretary General's report to the Security Council on Sudan.
 - The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Taskforce on Darfur will meet on 31 August to review the humanitarian situation in Darfur and Chad, remaining humanitarian requirements, the Abuja peace talks and Security Council consultations on Sudan. The Representative of the WHO Director-General for Health Action in Crises plans to participate.
 - The OCHA real-time evaluation of humanitarian response to the Darfur Crisis is expected to start in early September. WHO pledged US\$10,000 to support the process and will participate in the core learning group to inform the evaluation.
 - The Special Adviser of the UN Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa will visit the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia for consultations on the situation in Darfur and to seek support for addressing humanitarian requirements.
- **Uganda.**
 - From 29 August to 2 September, the OCHA Inter-Agency Internal Displacement Division mission will discuss protection issues with humanitarian stakeholders in Northern Uganda and Kampala.
 - A Workshop on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict will take place in Kampala on 9-10 September.
- **Integrated Missions.** WHO plans to participate in the 31 August NGO/IASC meeting in Geneva, the subject of which is integrated missions.
- **GBV in emergency settings.** WHO will partake in the 7 September meeting of a sub-group of the IASC Gender Taskforce on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in emergencies. The sub-group is designing a matrix on GBV programming and implementation in emergency situations; this will eventually constitute guidelines on GBV control in emergency settings.
- **World Conference on Disaster Reduction.** WHO is finalizing its submission to the Inter-Agency Secretariat for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) for thematic sessions at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (Kobe, Japan, January 2005).
- **Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs.** The Representative of the Director-General for Health Action in Crises plans to participate in the next ECHA meeting on 7 September.

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- **Preparedness.** WHO, as a member of the IASC Sub-working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning, is in the process of providing feedback on the draft Inter-Agency Early Warning Web Service, which will be presented to the IASC WG in New York for endorsement.
- **Poverty Reduction and Displacement.** WHO will attend the UNHCR meeting, hosted by Denmark, on poverty reduction through durable solutions for displaced persons in development aid policies and projects.
- **Internal Displacement.** Preparations are underway for the next meeting of the Senior Inter-Agency Network on Internal Displacement on 7 September in Geneva. The Representative of the Director-General for Health Action in Crises plans to participate.
- **Human Rights.** The XXVIII Round Table on Current Problems of International Humanitarian Law, organized by the International Institute of Humanitarian Law and the ICRC, will take place in San Remo, Italy, from 2-4 September.
- **HIV/AIDS.** Preparations are underway for an OCHA/UNAIDS mission to Angola from 6-9 September to advocate and fundraise for the HIV/AIDS guidelines in complex emergencies.
- **Training.** WHO will participate in Exercise TRIPLEX in Norway from 5-10 September.

SPECIAL- Meeting on the Findings of Health Impact Assessments in Southern Africa

- A meeting was held in Johannesburg 23-25 August 2004 to present the findings of WHO-supported health impact assessments in six of the countries that were worst affected by the recent humanitarian crisis in Southern Africa.
- According to the outcomes of the meeting, the complex humanitarian situation in Southern Africa continues unabated, resulting mainly from a vicious downward spiral of sharply increasing HIV/AIDS morbidity and mortality, disintegrated communities and deepening poverty. Crude Mortality Rates of around 0.8 per 10,000 per day - which are close to the threshold for a humanitarian crisis - are still being reported.
- The meeting highlighted the institutional and structural inability of health systems in Southern Africa to cope with the burden of rising levels of ill-health. The overall lack of essential infrastructure, key equipment, support services, medical supplies, surveillance systems, and supervision of field staff was cited as a key contributing factor to the health aspects of the crisis.
- The meeting called for WHO Country Representatives in Southern Africa to advocate to the international community for increased attention to humanitarian crisis in Southern Africa (so that it is not over-shadowed by acute crises that feature prominently in the international press) and underline the ongoing need for scaled up financial resources and focused action to rebuild ailing social and economic systems.

Please send any comments and corrections to kollert@who.int.

MAP DISCLAIMER: *The presentation of material on the maps contained herein does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the World Health Organization concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or areas or of its authorities, or concerning the delineation of its frontiers or boundaries. Map source: Perry Castaneda Library Map Collection, University of Texas at Austin.*

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