EL NIÑO FORECAST AND HUMANITARIAN CONSEQUENCES

- Above-normal rainfall is expected in Tanzania until January 2016 that may lead to flooding and humanitarian consequences which could last to mid-2016.

CURRENT AND PROJECTED HEALTH CONDITIONS

- The country is currently experiencing a cholera outbreak with 12,000 reported cases. It is likely to worsen from January to April 2016 and it may spread to more locations if the previous El Niño/cholera interaction patterns repeat (e.g. heavy rainfall in dry land areas and human contamination of water supplies). This is the largest outbreak since 1997-1998, which had over 40,000 reported cases, and depending on the response and the rain patterns, it is possible that the epidemic could reach similar levels in 2016.
- There is also the possibility of an elevated risk of Rift Valley Fever, malaria, dengue and Chikungunya, resulting from an increase of vectors from El Niño-related heavy rains.

HEALTH PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE ACTIONS

- In 2015, the Roll Back Malaria Partnership supported the development of climate information services for malaria at the Tanzanian Meteorological Agency (TMA) through the development of online “Maprooms,” providing information on the historical, current and potential future climate: http://maproom.meteo.go.tz/maproom/
- WHO repurposed its office staff to prioritize support to the cholera response, including its five field offices, the WHO Regional Office and HQ. They have provided additional expertise to support the Ministry of Health task force subcommittees for coordination, surveillance, case management, social mobilization and water/sanitation/hygiene efforts. A WHO cholera support response plan was developed and WHO supported the drafting of the national cholera response plan. Surged personnel have added up to 14 additional staff.
- An Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was established to contribute to cholera control and provides a capability for addressing diseases and other health effects linked to the El Niño rains and other hazards. Currently, the EOC is attempting to integrate meteorological information and updated pluviometry to assess and monitor trends. Recent rains in affected locations are expected to result in an increase of cases, thus intensifying the need for case management.
- The current response budget of USD 3.5 million remains 75% underfunded.

*INFORM (Index for Risk Management) is a global risk assessment index for humanitarian crises and disasters: http://www.inform-index.org/