

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION FOR HEALTH ACTION IN CRISES

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

SAVING LIVES AND REDUCING SUFFERING

HEALTH SITUATION

Despite the increasing health crisis in Central African Republic (CAR), appeals for assistance have not been met and it remains an underfunded and “forgotten” emergency in one of the poorest countries in the world.

Health indicators have continued deteriorating rapidly in recent years as internal conflict has persisted causing widespread displacement and the destruction of the health infrastructure. An estimated 2.2 million people, over 60% of the population, have been affected by the conflict. The country is also host to over 50,000 refugees, mainly from neighbouring Sudan but also from Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and another 19 African countries.

Systems for disease surveillance and response and routine vaccination have broken down. Outbreaks of polio, meningitis and measles were reported in 2004/05. It is estimated that over one-third of the population is highly vulnerable to preventable diseases. In 2004, transmission of HIV, tuberculosis and sleeping sickness rose steeply.

The situation is compounded by the lack of safe drinking water in rural areas, severe levels of childhood malnutrition and insufficient health services. The recent conflict has also seen an alarming increase in attacks of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against women. It has resulted in widespread trauma and a heightened risk of HIV/AIDS and other STIs. The population of CAR is facing a silent but pervasive health crisis. The situation is particularly desperate for the poorest segments of the population, for the most part women and children. Although the long-term health needs in CAR are immense, targeted emergency interventions that do not require a substantial investment of resources can and will make a significant impact and help halt the ongoing deterioration.

WHO ACTION IN 2005

In 2005, WHO appealed for 2.6 million to tackle disease surveillance and control, SGBV, reproductive health, EPI, and HIV/AIDS, but received no funding. However, it was able to implement several projects using small regular budget resources and internal borrowing. In 2005, WHO initiated reproductive health activities and supported the country in stopping the transmission of polio. WHO contributed to the UN effort to support the flood-affected popula-



tions in Bangui town by providing safe drinking water, strengthening the health district epidemiological surveillance system and supporting health education and media sensitization. An Emergency Health Kit, providing for the needs of 10,000 people, was pre positioned in CAR to respond to similar emergency situations.

A short film on CAR was also produced jointly with the BBC in the framework of its advocacy activities.

WHO PLANNED ACTIONS IN 2006

The districts of Ouham, Ouham-Pendé, Nana-Gribizi, Ombella-Mpoko, Kémo and Bangui which all together cover 70% of the population, are of particular concern and the focus of WHO activities in 2006.

Assessing and responding directly to unmet needs to reduce mortality and morbidity

- Assessment and monitoring of the health situation
- Reinforce surveillance systems of epidemic-prone diseases in high-risk areas (Bangui and conflict affected regions)

Coordinating health programmes in emergency situations

- Strengthening of coordination in Bangui and in the conflict-affected areas

Identifying and filling public health gaps

- Ensuring water quality in health facilities
- Preventing and controlling sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis
- Ensuring medical and psychosocial support to SGBV victims, including reducing the transmission of HIV/AIDS among victims
- Strengthening emergency obstetric care
- Building capacity for preparedness and response to emergencies and disasters
- Reinforcing prevention of infectious diseases in childhood at primary health level
- Launching of the expanded immunization programme

Strengthening local capacity to deliver health services

- Reinforce the capacity of the Ministry of Health to provide emergency obstetric health services through training and provision of essential supplies and neo-natal needs

PROJECTS AND ESTIMATED RESOURCES REQUIRED FOR 2006

WHO plans to implement ten projects within these priority areas. Further details of the objectives, activities and budget for each project are available within the UN Consolidated Appeal for the Central African Republic 2006 <http://ochaonline.un.org/cap2006/index.htm>

WHO is appealing for US\$ 4,125,430 to maintain and build on the above interventions that are urgently needed to address the increasing health crisis in the Central African Republic.

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