El Niño and health
SOMALIA overview - January 2016

EL NIÑO FORECAST AND HUMANITARIAN CONSEQUENCES

- Somalia faces a protracted crisis that increases the impact of the El Niño climatic conditions. The effects of drought in north western Somalia could extend several months into 2016. 2.3 million people - more than two-thirds being internally displaced people - are in food-stressed situations and the number of people in severe food insecurity may increase by over 400 000.
- Since the rainy season began in October, floods have affected an estimated 145 000 people - including more than 60 000 displaced people. Potential massive flooding can still be expected in early 2016 in the southern and central parts of the country, and could affect between 500 000 and 900 000 people along the Juba and Shabelle river basins. Up to 200 000 people could be affected by flash floods in low lying areas in Galgaduud, Mudug and Nugaal regions.

CURRENT AND PROJECTED HEALTH CONDITIONS

- Nearly 215 000 children under the age five are acutely malnourished, of whom almost 40 000 are severely malnourished and face a high risk of disease and death. In settlements for internally displaced people, global acute malnutrition rates were found to be consistently above the emergency threshold of 15%. Floods could cause loss of crops due to harvesting and household food storage. The affected households could then be food insecure for a long period of time as they wait for the 2016 Gu harvests.
- There are heightened risks of possible outbreaks of water-borne diseases and a lack of clean water, shallow wells in which people depend for clean water being destroyed or contaminated by the floods. About 4 000 cases of acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) and cholera were recorded with 85% of the cases being children under five years of age.
- Malaria outbreaks could increase due to stagnant waters that are conducive for vector multiplication. There is also the possibility of a resurgence of Rift Valley Fever in humans due to an associated increased risk of Rift Valley Fever in animals.
- Around 3 300 suspected measles cases have been reported so far. No new polio cases were reported in 2015, however, this does not rule out the re-importation of polio. Vaccinations to curb the current measles outbreak and to eradicate polio will need to be sustained to increase the extremely low vaccination coverage of only 30%.
- Medical care will also be in critical need as many health facilities will either be inundated or washed away.

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

- In September 2015, the El Niño Inter-agency Contingency Plan identified a funding need of USD 6 million for the health sector (Health Cluster): USD 3 million for immediate response and USD 3 million for preparedness to assist up to 500,000 people with the following priorities:
  - Support for functioning health sector coordinating mechanisms;
  - Continued access to health services;
  - Increased surveillance and control of communicable diseases and vectors.

- WHO has been working with the Ministry of Health to implement the following actions through Health Cluster coordination:
  - Mapping of health partners presence and response capacity in flood prone areas;
  - Stock prepositioning, mapping of partner’s available stock of medical supplies and distribution of emergency medical kits to identified health facilities and hospitals across Somalia;
  - Strengthening health partner’s capacity for effective and coordinated response, including training of health workers in sentinel sites on case management of common endemic diseases, including Acute Watery Diarrhoea/Cholera to facilitate detection and reporting and timely response in flood affected areas;
  - Mobilization of communities living in flood prone areas to improve awareness and preparedness planning for the impact of El Niño;
  - Collection/dissemination of flood information to health partners in collaboration with WASH and Food Security Clusters;
  - Puntland zonal Health Cluster was re-activated, with International Organization for Migration as the focal point;
  - Health Cluster Regional Focal Points tasks have been re-defined to address El Niño effects, including mobilisation of available resources, coordination of partner’s interventions, and conducting needs assessments.