HIGHLIGHTS

WHO is on process of securing approximately $ 6 million from DFID and CIDA Canada to support the Meningococcal Meningitis Preparedness and Response Plan developed by the FMoH.

Deaths from Unknown causes reported two weeks ago from Gerbo town of Fik Zone in Somali Region.


I. DISEASE OUTBREAK SITUATIONS IN ETHIOPIA

1. Meningococcal Meningitis Cases in Ethiopia

**Situation**

⇒ From 1st of January to 21st of March 2008 there were 172 suspected meningococcal meningitis cases and 9 deaths recorded nationally (Case fatality rate: 5.2%). Reports are from 4 out of 11 regions: Afar, 3 cases and 1 death; Oromiya, 39 cases and 3 deaths; SNNPR, 129 cases and 5 deaths and Addis Ababa city administration 1 case and no death. Sidama zone with a total population of 2,742,095 people in SNNPR is the most affected zone: 107 cases and 2 deaths from 7 districts (See attached annex 2).

⇒ The majority of cases were screened based on standard cases definition. The laboratory confirmation was not possible due to:

* Poor technical capability of health workers to perform Lumbar puncture in most of the affected areas;
* Lack of adequate supplies and equipment for performing lumbar puncture,
* Expiration of available meningitis test kits in most of the sites.

**Response**

⇒ Health extension workers (HEWs) conducted sensitization campaigns and ensured early referral of cases.

⇒ Essential drugs and medicals supplies provided to regions by WHO last December were sent to affected district. Funds have been allocated to the region for health staff training. In addition WHO allocated funds to region to undertake community sensitization.

⇒ Currently WHO is assisting the FMoH in procuring drugs, meningitis test kits, medical supplies and vaccines for replenishing the stocks at regional and peripheral levels.

⇒ Agreement between DFID and UNOCHA was finalized. The one between UNOCHA and WHO is in progress to be signed. Discussions on areas of support between CIDA Canada and WHO has been finalized. The development of agreement to be signed by both parties is in progress. DFID is funding the procurement of 1.5 million doses of meningococcal meningitis vaccines ($1,983,000). Funds from CIDA Canada will be used to procure drugs and additional vaccines and support operational cost of the vaccination exercise ($ 4 million).
2. Measles Out-break Situation in Ethiopia

⇒ The FMoH records show that there were 13 measles out-breaks nationally from 1st of January 2008 to date. Total suspected cases to date are 6,404 cases from outbreaks and sporadic cases of which 1812 were confirmed (112 lab confirmed and 1700 cases confirmed by epi link).
⇒ There were 93 deaths of which 12 occurred in the health facilities and 81 inside the communities. Reports were from 24 affected districts in 5 out of 11 regions: Oromiya, 6,202 cases (96.8% of total cases; SNNPR, 145 cases; Gambella, 31; Addis Ababa 21 and Afar 5 cases.
⇒ The majority of cases were from Hambella Wamana (3,245 cases) and Karcha (2,428) districts in Guji Zone of Oromiya Region.
⇒ The mass vaccination campaign is completed in the 4 more affected districts in Guji Zone two weeks ago. The campaign was conducted by the RHB and MSF Belgium with the support of WHO. Population less than 15 years old were targeted. The campaign addressed measles vaccination and distribution of vitamin A.
⇒ MoU between UNOCHA and WHO in order to release $700,000 to support large scale immunization campaign in the other 24 districts of Guji and Borena zones is in progress.

3. Suspected Cases of acute watery diarrhea in Dolo Ado District (Liben Zone) of Somali Region

⇒ Report from the investigation team deployed from Regional Health Bureau (RHB) with the support from WHO to investigate the suspected cases of acute watery diarrhea (AWD) in Liben Zone of Somali Region recorded a total of 97 suspected cases and 8 deaths.
⇒ The first case was reported on 14th of January and the last case on 15th of March 2008.
⇒ The laboratory investigation was not possible due the absence of active case during the mission period.
⇒ AWD cases were also reported by Kenya health authorities in the Kenyan district bordering Dolo Ado district. According to Kenyan health authorities, the laboratory investigations in Kenyan side isolated Vibrio Cholera.
⇒ The outbreak is almost under control in Ethiopian side. No more new reported case since 15th of March 2008.

4. Polio Eradication Program

⇒ During the last five weeks (week 7 to 11) of 2008 there were 53 acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) reported nationally and none is confirmed positive for polio.

<table>
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<th>Wk7</th>
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<th>Wk10</th>
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Somali Emergency Operations

⇒ Discussions in order to extend humanitarian assistance in the five military operation zones of Somali Region for three more months are on going. Officially the Somali Operations ends on 31st of March 2008.

⇒ Mobile team operating near Gerbo district were deployed to Gerbo town on 10th of March. The team reported not finding patient with symptoms indicated above. In reality the mobile team is not equipped with adequate knowledge and capacity to perform case investigation.

⇒ Investigation team from the Regional Health Bureau (RHB) is ready to travel to Gerbo district next week. WHO is providing financial support for the investigation exercise. Due to security problem WHO staff will most likely not join the investigation team. Fik Zone is one of the military operation areas in Somali Region. Many military check points are set up which restricts movement of humanitarian agencies.

Drought Situation in Ethiopia

⇒ The Government of Ethiopia has requested the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency (DPPA) to initiate as soon as possible an appeal to address the 2008 drought needs in Ethiopia. According to GoE there are approximately 1.5 millions people already affected by drought. The majority of the affected population are in Borena Zone of Oromiya Region, Afar and Somali Regions. Following the result of the rainfall forecast, the authorities expected an increase of affected population in the coming months.

⇒ The plan addresses the main health and nutrition problems such as malnutrition, diarrheal diseases, meningitis, measles and malaria.

⇒ A team comprised of DPPA, FMoH, UNICEF, WHO, WFP met on 22nd of March to review the plan from each sector.

⇒ On 24th of March 2008, the team will again meet at DPPA to finalize the plan that should be submitted to the Ethiopian government by the end of next week.

⇒ In addition an appeal to address the needs of 2008 drought in Ethiopia is requested by the GoE. The development of the health aspect has already started.

UNOCHA Delegation Visit to Addis Ababa on 21-22 March 2008

⇒ This week UN Country team received a delegation comprised of Mrs. Ahunna Eziakonawa, Chief for Africa and Families of Somali Region waiting for Humanitarian Assistance

⇒ Rania Dagash, Ethiopia Desk Officer OCHA NY. The purpose of the visit is to discuss 2008 OCHA’s priorities.

IV. COMMENTS

Somali Emergency Operations

⇒ With the recognition by the authorities of the necessity of having an emergency preparedness and response plan for 2008 and an appeal for 2008 drought that includes Somali emergency operations, the UN Country team (UNCT) expects to have the approval from the GoE to extend their activities for three more months in the five military operation zone in Somali Region.
**V. ANNEXES**

Meningococcal Meningitis Situation in Ethiopia

**Annex 1**: Reported meningitis case/death by epidemic week nationally from Week 50 (2007) to Week 11 (2008)

**Annex 2**: Meningitis Cases per District and per Week in Sidama Zone of Oromiya Region (1 January to 21 March 2008)

**Annex 3**: Woredas reported Meningitis cases

For more information please contact:
WHO Country Office, Addis Ababa / Ethiopia
Tel: (+251) (0) 115 53 47 77 / 53 15 50
Email: who-wro@et.afro.who.int

Dr Amanu Gisso, WHO Consultant, delivering drugs to one health facility in a district reporting Meningitis Cases