Lebanon situation report #6
Friday 21 July 2006

Highlights

• The Government of Lebanon issued a list of emergency needs which includes (1) drugs such as medications for diarrhoea, chronic diseases, antibiotics, anti-inflammatory agents, painkillers, and tranquilizers, and (2) supplies such as intravenous fluids, chlorine, surgical gloves, dialysis filters and medical refrigerators.
• A global Health Cluster meeting took place yesterday in Geneva with participation from CDC, IFRC, ICMH, IMC, IOM, IRC, Merlin, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF and WHO. The first formal meeting with health partners in Lebanon was organized today in Beirut.
• UN security phase for all of Lebanon was upgraded to Phase IV. The suspension of non-essential missions and visits to Lebanon remains in effect.

Summary

• Current estimates report over 285 dead, 680 wounded and over 400 000 displaced, of which 95 000 are temporarily housed in schools and other public sector/communal buildings.
• There is an estimated 150 000 Lebanese refugees now in Syria, of which approximately one-third are in Damascus.
• Key health issues include various communicable diseases and chronic such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and kidney failure.
• The UN Country Team has expressed readiness to provide support to Syrian Red Crescent in efforts to accommodate the needs of displaced populations and refugees.

Health impact

• Private hospitals in Beirut are functional and currently have sufficient supplies, but access is a problem.
• Due to security issues, there are serious difficulties in moving supplies to health facilities.
• Poor hygiene and sanitation remains an issue in shelters. Cases of diarrhoea have been reported in some of the schools hosting displaced persons.
• In the Tyre area, UNRWA reports difficulty in delivering regular monthly medicines to people in the three camps due to insecurity and damages to the roads.

Health response

The WHO and partners are providing support in four areas:
1. Assessment and monitoring

- Preliminary humanitarian and health assessments are being initiated.
- WHO emergency staff continues to work in close collaboration with UN colleagues and Lebanese health authorities. Support is being provided according to urgent needs.
- WHO continues to conduct daily teleconferences with staff in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

2. Health coordination

- The first formal Health Cluster meeting took place this morning in Beirut and was coordinated by the Ministry of Health (MOH) and WHO. All stakeholders in health were invited and discussed assessments and coordination mechanisms.
- The health component of the joint Flash Appeal is under preparation in coordination with other health partners and should be launched on 24 July.
- Discrepancies exist in regards to statistics and WHO, UNDP and UNICEF will work to improve the validity of the statistics using MOH, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Social Affairs data to establish a common framework in regards to data.

3. Filling health gaps

- WHO is considering opening four sub-offices in Lebanon, three in the South and one in the North.
- The Government of Syria is providing support with medications to a camp in Damascus with about 500 Lebanese.
- Needs in other camps are being assessed.
- WHO is preparing a communicable diseases risk assessment profile, addressing diseases such as cholera, Shigella, measles and rubella. It will be made public shortly.
- New vehicles have been transported from Dubai to the Jordan Country Office. Two will be sent to Beirut, two to Damascus and two will stay in Amman.

4. Preserving and supporting local health systems

- The MOH, WHO and other partners continue to coordinate on the establishment of provisional referral systems and ways to ensure availability of essential drugs, and of health care for trauma, injuries, chronic conditions and the disabled.

Urgent needs

- Establishment of systems that allow for delivery of medical and other humanitarian supplies.
- Addressing the health needs of the displaced populations.

World Health Organization

http://www.emro.who.int/eha/
http://www.who.int/hac/en/

21 July 2006