WHO Response to the Crisis in Syria: Priorities and Achievements in Health
13 August 2014 - Amman, Jordan

**Country Highlights**

The Syrian Arab Republic has been subjected to over three years of conflict, characterized by a continued deterioration of the health situation.

**Overview of the Current Context**

The number of people affected by the violence increases steadily with the rise in hostilities in previously affected areas, as well as locations recently drawn into the conflict (e.g., Deir ez-Zor).

Access to health care services has been hindered by the escalation of the violence and the functioning facilities are unable to cope with the increasing needs of affected populations in conflict areas.
Country Highlights

The Syrian Arab Republic has been subjected to over three years of conflict, characterized by a continued deterioration of the health situation.
10.8 million people in need of humanitarian aid within Syria;

6.5 million IDPs mainly from Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Homs, Idleb and Hama;

2.5 million refugees in neighbouring countries and North Africa.
Overview of the Current Context

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Access to health care services has been hindered by the escalation of the violence and the functioning facilities are unable to cope with the increasing needs of affected populations in conflict areas.
Damage to Health Infrastructure

41% of public health hospitals are fully functioning; 35% are partially functioning, while; 24% are completely out of service;

71% of public health hospitals are accessible; 29% are not accessible;

62% of ambulances have been affected (damaged, stolen, burned etc.).
Trauma Care

750,000 have been injured with an average of **25,000 new injuries each month**;

Provision of **surgical supplies remains a challenge** especially to besieged locations and hard-to-reach areas;

Insufficient access to safe blood is increasingly exposing the population to the **risk of blood-borne diseases** as the access to the Syrian Blood Bank has decreased;

**NEEDS:**

- **Rehabilitation of operating theaters**, especially in areas where major damage occurred;
- **Increase requests for mobile hospitals and mobile clinics.**
Trauma Care: Achievements

• The distribution of Blood Safety kits sufficient for 119,000 blood bags, including to hard-to-reach areas;

• Launch the rehabilitation of Emergency Units in several hospitals, mainly in Damascus and Homs;

• Strengthening the capacity of over 300 health care professionals, including physicians, paramedics and nurses.
Primary Health Care

Sharp decrease in routine vaccination coverage from 90% before 2011 to 52% in March 2014;

Increased risk of childhood morbidity and mortality from vaccine-preventable diseases;

The adequacy and equity of provision of services in public health facilities has been significantly affected;

The health workforce has been significantly reduced as many health professionals have fled the country.
Primary Health Care: Achievements

- Support the implementation of **8 Polio campaigns targeting 2.9 million children** under 5;

- Contracted **45 NGOs** to support the provision of PHC across the country;

- Support PHC outreach activities through the **provision of 30 mobile clinics** to an array of health partners, including NGOs in hard-to-reach areas;

- Delivery of PHC **medicines and equipment** to different partners, including local health authorities, NGOs and SARC in hard-to-reach areas and besieged locations.
Secondary and Tertiary Health Care

Over 2 million people are in acute need of secondary and tertiary health care services;

The lack of skilled health professionals and the absence of infection control protocols as well shortages in life-saving medicines have been hindering the provision of S\THC services;

Severe shortages in noncommunicable disease medicines and other crucial medication, including haemodialysis sessions and diabetes treatments.
Secondary and Tertiary Health Care: Achievements

- Approximately **1.7 million patients** have been benefited from the distribution of medicines, including besieged locations, hard-to-reach and opposition-controlled areas;

- Supported diabetic patients with **450,000 insulin vials** treatments;

- Developed the **2014 Essential Medicines List** for Syria;

- Distributed **intravenous fluids to health facilities** in all governorates;

- Supported the development of the **National Infection Control Guideline**;

- Strengthened the capacity of health care workers on **infection control protocols and safe practices**.
The population is at risk of rapid spread of Communicable Diseases due to overcrowded living conditions with poor sanitary conditions, malnutrition and the drop in immunization coverage from more than 90% to 52%;

Disruption of the existing routine surveillance system means a higher risk of epidemic-prone diseases such as measles, cholera, bacterial meningitis and other communicable diseases.
Distribution of the EWARS Sentinel Sites by Governorate

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The Early Waning, Alert and Response System (EWARS): Achievements

- Over 600 sentinel sites feed the system, 32% of which are in opposition and hard-to-reach areas;

- Conducted regular assessments and training activities to reinforce the capacity of the public health labs

- Undertook preventive actions such as prepositioning of supplies to permit rapid dispatch upon authorization across the country;

- Developed and update the Summer-month and Winterization plans;

- Detected and responded disease outbreaks nationwide, such as measles, polio, pertussis, A(H1N1), and typhoid.
Health Information System

Limited accessibility and insecurity as well as the frequent cuts of power and communication means are the main challenges to data collection;

Sustainability and timely reporting are hindered by the high turn-over and shortages in health staff;

Additional communication equipment are needed to upgrade the operational capacity especially in hard-to-reach areas;

Expansion of the system to include selected private hospitals is also needed.
Health Information System: Achievements

- Integration of the Health Resources and services Availability Mapping System (HeRAMS) into the Emergency Health Information System;

- Strengthening the response of WHO and the health sector by systematic identification of needs and gaps provided by the HeRAMS;

- The expansion of HeRAMS to cover all 14 governorates;

- As of the 2nd Quarter of 2014, the system has been expanded to cover MoHE hospitals;

- Conduct assessment for 109 hospitals using HeRAMS, with 98% completeness;

- Capacitating a total of 942 national staff through 16 training workshops since the beginning of 2014 on HeRAMS.
There has been a **decline in the nutritional status of children under 5** and other vulnerable groups especially in most affected areas;

**7.1% of children** screened for malnutrition in Aleppo (a total of 3,000) were detected with **moderate acute malnutrition** (MAM) and **1.4%** with severe acute malnutrition (SAM);

**30%** of children have been reported underweight-for-age in Daraa governorate;

In May, **12 cases of complicated SAM were admitted** to hospitals in Hama during a span of 2 weeks.
**Nutrition: Achievements**

- Supported the establishment of **8 Therapeutic Feeding Centers** (TFC) for the management of severe malnutrition in hospitals across the country, (3 centres are under establishment);

- **Over 190 doctors and health workers** (from 11 governorates) have been trained;

- **Distributed micro-nutrients for children and mothers** during polio immunization campaigns.
Mental Health

A **severe increase in psychological distress** has been observed among the population;

Over **50% of the population** is estimated to be in need of psychosocial support;

Out of the **3 psychiatric facilities** in the country: one has been destroyed and one is partially functioning.
Mental Health: Achievements

- Supported the integration of mental health care workers into PHC facilities in 6 governorates;

- Developed the rehabilitation plan of the psychiatric units at Al-Mowasat and Ibn Roushed hospitals in Damascus and Zahi Azrak hospital in Aleppo;

- Provided essential psychotropic medications to psychiatric facilities in Damascus and Aleppo;

- Established a mapping process for MHPSS, child protection, and GBV services;

- Supported an intensive 5-month course for clinical psychologist teams;

- Trained trainers on WHO mhGAP guidelines for integration of MH Care at non-specialized health care settings;

- Developed an audiovisual toolkit in Arabic to support vulnerable communities.
Chemical Hazard Preparedness and Response

Increase protection measures for WHO staff, supply health facilities with antidotes and protective equipment;

Provide technical assistance and training on the clinical management of patients exposed to chemical weapons.
Chemical Hazard Preparedness and Response: Achievements

- Supported MoH to establish a national training team to build response capacity at pre-hospital and hospital locations;

- Supported advanced 4-day training for over 164 clinicians and 51 public health officials from 8 governorates;

- Supplied health facilities with antidotes and protective equipment (400 sets of PPE for healthcare workers and first responders have been prepositioned to 22 locations);

- Distributed over 450,000mg of atropine to hospitals in 9 governorates;

- Published the revised clinical management guidelines for chemical exposures in English and Arabic. This is also available as a free mobile application;

- Distribution of 100 escape and decontamination kits to WHO staff;

- Trained over 140 WHO and UN Staff on general awareness, escape and self-decontamination;

- Maintained a central stockpile of antidote for all eligible UN agencies.
WASH

Overcrowded living conditions and diminished per capita availability of water supply result in poor hygiene and **increased risk of infectious diseases**;

The water supply infrastructure has been **subjected to major destruction since 2011**;

The current availability of safe water inside Syria is now a **third of pre-crisis levels**;

The conflict has caused **severe damage to sewage systems, pumping stations** and other water infrastructure;

The situation is worsened by **frequent power cuts, fuel shortages** and limited maintenance of water works, especially in areas which witnessed high levels of violence (Rural Damascus, Deir ez-Zor, Homs, Aleppo and Ar-Raqqah);

Dramatic **increase of the risks of waterborne diseases** such as cholera, shigella, typhoid and hepatitis A.
WASH: Achievements

• The establishment of the Water Pollution Alert and Response System (WPARS) to detect and validate drinking water contamination incidents across the country;

• Prepositioned necessary materials and equipment for emergency response (water disinfecting chemicals, jerry cans, water purification units and water quality sensors);

• Provided solutions to sustain the supply of clean drinking water, such as water purification and filtration units, and electrical generators;

• Provided water pumps, generators, institutional filters and collapsible tanks to provide clean water to hospitals;

• Conducted trainings to improve water supply and hygiene conditions in public and NGO hospitals, as well as on good practices for medical waste management.
Cross-Border and Cross-Line Operations

The UN SC Resolution 2165 (2014) mandates UN agencies to deliver humanitarian supplies, including medicines and medical supplies to the Syrian population through the most direct routes, including via cross-border operations from Iraq, Jordan and Turkey, and cross-line operations;

A present, two border crossings on the Turkish border, and one on the Jordanian border, are operational under the terms of the Resolution.
Achievements

In the past two weeks, WHO delivered from Damascus surgical and medical supplies to Eastern Aleppo City and Mouadamiya in Rural Damascus for over 72,300 people.

WHO has agreed on basic principles and an operational plan for cross-border deliveries of medical aid. This will be adopted by the Health Sector in Syria to facilitate effective implementation of the Resolution.

WHO and UNICEF will host a meeting with NGOs involved in cross-border operations to reach a common understanding of coverage of current humanitarian interventions, develop communication and coordination mechanisms, and plan future operations.
Results

- More people in need of humanitarian assistance will have access to medicines and medical supplies through increased deliveries via cross-line and cross-border operations.

- In Syria, WHO has engaged the Government of Syria in plans to reach a higher number of people in need through cross-line operations.

- Building on the success of the Eastern Aleppo and Mouadamiya deliveries, preparations are currently underway to conduct further deliveries of to areas under opposition control through interagency convoys, during routine distribution, and through partner NGOs.

- **WHO will conduct its first cross border deliveries of medicines and medical aid from Turkey and Jordan within August**, and will evaluate impact on a quarterly basis.
WHO Achievements In Health

7,263,770 direct beneficiaries reached through the distribution of medicines and equipment

2,913,640 children <5 years of age vaccinated against polio

589,407 people reached through delivery and distribution of kits

746,279 children vaccinated against measles (in June)

As of August 2014, 617 sentinel sites of the WHO Early Warning, Alert and Response System (EWARS) are reporting from health facilities from opposition- and government-controlled areas.

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Comparison of Beneficiaries Reached

- Treatments: 7.2 (2014), 4.6 (2013)
- Medical Kits: 1.5 (2014), 500k (2013)
- Polio campaign: 2.2 (2013), 2.9 (2014)
Funding Requirements

Revitalization of Primary Health Care services: (US$ 56,553,500)
Secondary Health Care: (US$ 48,483,626)
Trauma Care: (US$ 43,195,000)
Early Warning, Alert and Response System (EWARS): (US$ 16,486,560)
Mental Health: (US$ 8,206,900)
Rehabilitation health facilities (in collaboration with UNDP): (US$ 4,000,000)
Health Information System (HIS): (US$ 921,270)
Coordination: (US$ 462,796)
Funding Status

Funding required and received January - August 2014

- Received: 50,103,538
- Required: 178,309,652
Thank you!