Each week, the World Health Organization Department for Health Action in Crises in Geneva produces information highlights on the health aspects of selected humanitarian crises. Drawing on the various WHO programmes, contributions cover activities from field and country offices and the support provided by WHO regional offices and Headquarters. The mandate of the WHO Departments specifically concerned with Emergency and Humanitarian Action in Crises is to increase the effectiveness of the WHO contribution to crisis preparedness and response, transition and recovery. This note, which is not exhaustive, is designed for internal use and does not reflect any official position of the WHO Secretariat.

### Occupied Palestinian Territory

The IASC Task Force on Lebanon meets twice weekly exchanging information on the situation and the operations.

Health Coordination meetings are held regularly in Beirut and Tyre.

During the Stockholm Conference, donors nearly doubled expectations of aid, pledging US$ 940 million to help rebuild Lebanon.

Assessments and events:

- During the Stockholm Conference, the international community pledged US$ 500 million in aid. Most of the donations will be bilateral but some is expected to fund the health component of the revised UN humanitarian appeal which is critically underfunded despite growing humanitarian needs, especially in Gaza.


### Lebanon

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Assessments and events:

- A WHO assessment of health facilities shows that a quarter of those examined are not functioning due to physical damage, lack of staff or lack of accessibility, and that water and fuel shortages remain a serious concern.
- Only one-third have potable water, and just one in four remain linked to the general sewerage system or to a power supply. 31% use generators but less than one in five has enough fuel to run them. The report can be seen at: [http://www.who.int/hac/crises/international/middle_east/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/hac/crises/international/middle_east/en/index.html)
- No disease outbreaks have been reported so far. However, large scale damage to water and sewage networks remains a major concern.
- An interagency joint assessment mission was organized to Kafr Chouba, where 80 dwellings were destroyed and 600 damaged. WHO reports that the health centre is functioning. Electrical power supply is available and people have access to safe water supply. The municipality requested 150 household water tanks to replace the damaged ones. Cluster bombs and unexploded ordnances remain a significant concern to the community.

Actions:

- Over 80 physicians, nurses and health workers were trained on surveillance and outbreak investigation in Dahia (South Beirut), Baalbeck and Hashbaya.
- WHO sent one Trauma kit to Rachaya hospital.
- Following the report of an increased number of diarrhoea cases in Yanouh (south of Tyre), WHO’s investigation reported that the situation is under control. As a preventive measure, WHO gave 200 kilograms of chlorine to the Wadi Gilo water station which is providing drinking water to Yanouh.
- Another 800 kilograms were provided to the water pump station in Tyre.
- WHO supported the public hospitals in Nabatieh and Tyre with two water purification systems units donated by Global Medics. Staff received training on the proper use and maintenance of the machines.


WHO is working with partners to address the health aspects of crises in more than 40 countries. Check the Health Action in Crises Web site for more details: [http://www.who.int/hac/](http://www.who.int/hac/)

**SUDAN**

**Assessments and events:**
- In **South Darfur**, the trend of cholera has significantly declined over the last month thanks to improved surveillance, case management, health education, water monitoring and chlorination activities.
- In **North Darfur**, the total number of cholera cases as of 30 August was 119 including 5 deaths. Three-quarters of these were reported in El Fasher town.
- Between 21 April and 1 September, 6901 cases of cholera, including 222 deaths, were reported in **northern Sudan**.
- In **southern Sudan**, 17 796 cases of cholera, including 525 deaths were reported between 28 January and 4 September.

**Actions:**
- WHO is participating in the cholera task force of the Federal MoH, taking responsibility for risk assessment, surveillance and standardization of case management.
- In **West Darfur**, WHO continues coordinating and monitoring cholera preparedness activities.
- In **North Darfur**, WHO is supporting the State MoH response to cholera through active case finding and training of community health workers.
- WHO continues to provide consumables and drugs against cholera to the El Fasher teaching hospital and to support water quality monitoring.
- Refresher training for community leaders, health workers and school teachers on water and food safety, hygiene and sanitation in Kutum area will be conducted by the IRC and the State MoH with support from WHO.
- In **South Darfur**, WHO and UNICEF are working on the implementation of cholera-related activities to ensure coordination, strengthen health education interventions, and reinforce surveillance.
- WHO proposed to establish rapid response teams to ensure quicker investigation. A training workshop will be held in Ed Ederfersan locality.
- In **East Sudan**, training on standard case management of cholera started on 4 September in Port Sudan hospital. The training targets 30 doctors and 60 medical assistants, with participation of the Federal MoH.
- In 2006, contributions for WHO’s emergency activities were received from the European Commission, Finland, Ireland, Norway, Switzerland, the CERF and the 2006 Common Humanitarian Fund.

**CÔTE D’IVOIRE**

**Assessments and events:**
- In Abidjan, two people have reportedly died and approximately 1100 have sought health care as a result of inhaling toxic fumes from petroleum waste.
- The sudden influx of people seeking medical assistance has led to a strain on the capacities of the emergency services in Abidjan and to drug shortages.
- The Government formed a crisis cell to investigate the incident led by the Ministry of Environment, and including the Ministries of Health, Defence and Communications and the Anti-Pollution Agency of Côte d’Ivoire.
- The Government officially requested international assistance.

**Actions:**
- The MoH has requested WHO to provide more information on chemical intoxications. The WHO Department for Public Health and Environment is supporting the Country Office with relevant technical information.
- WHO, UN agencies and NGO partners are in contact with the MoH to define a plan of intervention, including the provision of drugs and laboratory equipment according to needs.
- WHO is assisting the MoH in working on clear public health messages to prevent further toxic fume inhalation cases and to provide information.

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### Democratic Republic of the Congo

#### Assessments and events:
- The humanitarian situation remains a subject of concern in the eastern provinces. More than 150,000 displaced persons are under severe distress south of Bunia, in the District of Ituri, including up to 45,000 in Geti. Access to health care is difficult and there is no safe drinking water.
- MSF has left Geti following an armed robbery at their compound. The staff retreated to Bunia and are trying to continue assisting the displaced.
- Cholera continues; more than 200 cases have been reported between 15 and 30 August in the Nyemba and Kikondja health zones in Katanga. In North Kivu, 97 cases were reported in Uvira and in surrounding areas. In Ituri, 77 cases were reported in Geti and 26 in Bunia.

#### Actions:
- WHO supported the delivery of 22 tonnes of medicines and emergency kits donated by the Government of Italy for displaced people in Katanga.
- WHO participated in interagency missions to Songolo, Medu and Aveba, in Ituri, where several thousands of displaced people have sought refuge. Lack of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation may put the health of the population at risk of waterborne diseases.
- WHO supported local health authorities in Bunia in conducting an investigation mission on the cholera outbreak.
- WHO supported local health authorities in Bandundu, Bas Congo, in the micro-planning for the upcoming measles vaccination campaign.
- In 2006, WHO’s activities are supported by Finland and Italy. Funds were received from OCHA’s Humanitarian Fund and the CERF.

### Niger

#### Assessments and events:
- In August, excessive rains were reported in the regions of Agadez, Zinder, Tahoua, Dosso and Tillaberi causing severe flooding and affecting more than 15,600 people.
- Humanitarian partners have conducted preliminary missions to evaluate the damages, organize assistance and ensure the ongoing monitoring of the nutritional, food and hygiene situation.
- The main needs include tents, food stuff, blankets, bed nets as well as medicines and consumables.

#### Actions:
- The WHO Country Office is coordinating its action with Headquarters and the Regional Office to ensure a prompt response to the population’s needs.
- No voluntary contributions have been received in 2006.

### Nepal

#### Assessments and events:
- Heavy monsoon rains have caused floods and landslides in the mid and far western regions of Nepal. 45 have died and up to 69,000 people are affected.
- The government has appealed for USD 32.5 million for relocation of 500 families in Achham district, construction and maintenance of 10,000 houses and relief assistance for 10,500 families for one month in Banke, Bardiya and Achham districts.

#### Actions:
- WHO, other UN agencies and international and national NGOs continue supporting the efforts of the District Disaster Relief Committee and the Nepalese Red Cross Society to ensure that needs are being met.
- WHO procured medicines for 1000 flood and landslide affected victims to regarding what to do when first symptoms are observed.
- In 2006, WHO’s emergency activities were funded by the CERF.
supplement donations from the national health authorities and NGOs.

- WHO dispatched a rapid health assessment team to Bardiya and Banke to assist in assessments, coordination, surveillance and ensure any arising gaps are addressed.
- WHO visited districts in the Eastern, Central and Far-western Development Region to collect data for a humanitarian public health baseline assessment. So far, data from health institutions and the Nepal Red Cross Society from seven districts have been collected and analysed.
- WHO’s emergency activities for 2006 are supported by Sweden.

**GUINEA**

**Assessments and events:**
- Between 1 January and 15 August, 1715 cases of cholera including 145 deaths (CFR 8.5%), have been reported in Guinea, of which 1551 cases and 135 deaths were recorded in Guinea Forestière.
- Lack of safe drinking water and poor sanitation remain one of the main causes of the persistent epidemic in the region. The continuing inflation is also threatening the nutritional status of children and elderly people.
- Funds are lacking for the provision of cholera kits and the implementation of regular surveillance activities.

**Actions:**
- WHO, UNICEF and partners are supporting the MoH in the implementation of a water treatment campaign to fight against the cholera outbreak in Kissidougou, Guéckédou, Macenta, Yomou, N’Zérékoré, Lola and Beyla.
- WHO provided training on proper chlorination to local health authorities and is supporting the campaign through regular supervision of activities.
- So far no extra funding has been received to support emergency activities but support from the Central Emergency Respond Fund is expected. WHO, UNHCR are UNICEF have prepared a joint proposal for CERF funding to support activities against cholera in Guinea Forestière and the meningitis outbreak in Haute Guinea.

**HORN OF AFRICA**

**Assessments and events:**
- Pastoralists in the region are calling on governments to introduce policies to better facilitate the movement and sale of livestock, according to a report published by the UN OCHA Pastoralist Communication Initiative. Some 8.5 million people mainly from pastoralist communities across the region are affected by severe food shortages.
- On top of the on-going food shortages in the South, Somalia is experiencing political instability and may be on the verge of another military conflict. Severe rains are currently flooding parts of the country and in Mogadishu thousands have been displaced by flooding.

**Actions:**
- In Djibouti, WHO is using CERF funds strengthen nutritional and communicable disease surveillance, support outreach health services and supply medical goods to the most affected areas.
- In Eritrea, outreach services in Foro sub zone, in Northern Red Sea, provided immunization, antenatal and post natal care, iron supplementation and health education to 1929 children, 2571 women aged 15 to 49 and 643 pregnant women. Some 119 children who had been missed by the national measles immunization campaign were vaccinated.
- In Somalia, WHO has strengthened and decentralized its presence and provided drugs and supplies. It is working on assessment and monitoring and is supporting community-based care and mobile outreach services. WHO also works on long term health structure development and human resources strengthening and capacity building for chronically underserved areas.
- WHO’s emergency activities are supported by a grant from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). Additional support is provided by Italy for Djibouti and Sweden for Somalia.
## ETHIOPIA

Assessments and events:
- The WHO report *Meeting the MDG Drinking-Water and Sanitation Target: the Urban and Rural Challenge of the Decade* states that many least developed countries, including Ethiopia, will have to more than double their efforts in order to reach the MDG drinking water target.
- In rural areas, access to safe drinking water (15%) and to basic sanitation (7%) still falls short of what is needed to achieve the MDG.
- The diarrhoea outbreak has infected at least 16,555 people and killed 196. Aid workers fear the epidemic which has been stoked by heavy flooding could spread even further. Ethiopia’s southern region is particularly hard-hit.

Actions:
- A joint MoH, OCHA, WHO and UNICEF assessment was carried out in the regions most affected by the AWD outbreak. WHO, UNICEF and NGOs are assisting the MoH with case management, prevention and control.
- The Federal MoH and WHO estimate that 20 million people are at risk of AWD and are approaching the international community with a project proposal of USD 873,000.

## INTER-AGENCY ISSUES

- **Contingency Planning.** The next inter-agency meeting on emergency preparedness and response will take place early September.
- **Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration.** On 6 September, the Inter-Agency Working Group updated on the Launch of the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards and on the Resource Centre.
- **Tsunami Recovery.** On 6 September, the IASC-UNDG Taskforce discussed the Taskforce schedule for the coming months and updated on Early Warning Systems.
- **Pakistan.** On 6 September, the IASC-UNDG Taskforce on the South Asia Earthquake updated on the implementation of theERRA/UN Early Recovery Plan and discussed contingency planning and preparedness for the winter, capacity building for disaster preparedness and the findings of the Joint draft OCHA/UNDG/UNDP mission report.
- **CERF.** On 6 September, an inter-agency working level meeting discussed the preparations of the Secretary-General’s Report on the Central Emergency Response Fund.
- **Gender.** On 6 September, the IASC Taskforce on Gender and Humanitarian Action updated on the draft handbook *Women, Girls, Boys and Men, Different Needs – Equal Opportunities*.
- **Clusters.**
  - **Emergency Shelter.** On 6 September, the Cluster Working Group discussed training, updated on the draft monitoring and reporting tools and briefed on activities in Lebanon and Somalia.
  - **Nutrition.** The Cluster Working Group will meet in Rome on 4-6 October.
  - **Health.** The Cluster Working Group is expected to meet in Geneva on 10-11 October.
  - **Cluster Guidance.** On 9 October, the IASC Working Group will discuss the revised Cluster Guidance Note.
- **Education in Emergencies.** On 12 September, Save the Children is launching in Geneva a new campaign and releasing new research on education for children affected by armed conflict.
- **Indonesia.** On 14 September, the IASC Taskforce will update on the situation and plans for the next months and discuss cluster coordination.
- **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support.** On 22 September, the IASC Taskforce will discuss the draft *Guidance on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings* and the future of the Taskforce.
- **Emergency Training.** The 2nd Emergency Team Leadership Programme will take place in Geneva on 8-13 October.

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Please send any comments and corrections to crises@who.int

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