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.

**HORN OF AFRICA**

Assessments and events:
- All across the Horn of Africa, insecurity due to violence as well as precarious access to flood and health care continues. Inter-state tensions are rising.
- In Ethiopia, 67 people were killed and 119,000 to 217,000 affected by the Wabe Shabelle River floods. Access to the affected areas is impossible and relief a challenge. Urgent action is needed to prevent outbreaks of infectious diseases, especially malaria and acute watery diarrhoea (AWD).
- This week, 2,768 cases of AWD and 23 deaths were reported, bringing the total to 35,314 cases and 411 deaths. Main reasons for the continuing spread of AWD are lack of safe water and environmental sanitation and poor community awareness. Human and financial resources also remain insufficient.
- Armed violence is forcing refugees out of South and Central Somalia (where the floods of the Wabe Shebelle also drowned 47 and left thousands homeless) into Kenya and Ethiopia.
- In Ethiopia, a survey for evaluation of the June/July measles campaign shows 98.3% of the children were vaccinated.
- In Kenya, two new cases of acute flaccid paralysis were reported in Garissa.
- A national immunization campaign against polio began 4 November in the districts of Moyale, Mandera, Ijara, Wajir and Garissa. Over 250,000 children under five are targeted.

Actions:
- In Ethiopia, WHO consultants are supporting the Regional Health Bureaus (RHB) of all flood-affected areas on needs assessments, surveillance, case detection and management and community education for AWD control.
- Twelve emergency kits were sent through the Federal MoH, of which two will be allocated to flood-affected districts.
- Through the Federal MoH, WHO provides financial support to the RHB to fill gaps in essential drugs, operational costs and staffing.
- WHO will allocate funds to strengthen surveillance and response activities in malaria endemic areas. Free insecticide-treated nets were distributed by the RHB and UNICEF and some affected villages were sprayed. Malaria drugs have been positioned in all flood affected regions.
- In Eritrea, the survey recommends strengthening awareness raising, outreach vaccination and routine services for immunization and highlights that improved estimates of target population for EPI programmes are needed.
- In Kenya, four WHO staff and three Inter Country Support team members supported the MoH in conducting the polio campaign.
- WHO activities in Ethiopia are supported by a grant from CERF, Italy for Djibouti and Sweden and Finland for Somalia and cluster coordination.

**OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY**

Assessments and events:
- The shelling of a residential area in the Gaza Strip town of Beit Hanoun killed 18 people.
- Over the past week, the primary health care system in Beit Hanoun ceased to function as staff were unable to reach their places of work. Compounded with shortages of specific medications, particularly for the treatment of chronic diseases, it caused increasing health risks for chronic patients, children and pregnant women.

Actions:
- In Beit Hanoun, WHO and the MoH are monitoring drug availability, access to and provision of health services.
- Steps have been taken to set up a UN interagency response including WHO, OCHA, UNICEF, WFP and UNRWA.
- WHO delivered two burn kits and necessary medical supplies.
- WHO gave a briefing at an EC-organized meeting about the health situation.
Health Action in Crises

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/)

### CHAD

**Assessments and events:**
- In the South-East, local conflict and the spill-over from the armed violence in Darfur have pushed the number of IDPs from 50,000 to an estimated 63,000. This includes more than 2,000 persons displaced near Koukou in October. Up to 220 people have been killed in clashes in the region during the past week.
- Eastern Chad already hosts 200,000 refugees from Sudan’s Darfur region.
- As of 22 October, 1201 cases of cholera and 56 deaths were reported, including 301 cases in N’Djamena.

**Actions:**
- From 1 to 3 November, WHO conducted an mission to Goz Beida and Koukou to assess the situation of the population displaced by the recent fighting. WHO provided the local health facility with essential drugs and plans to dispatch two more emergency kits next week.
- A loan from the United Kingdom revolving emergency funds has helped WHO initiate emergency activities in Chad.

![Chad Map](image1)

### CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

**Assessments and events:**
- The capture of Birao by rebels in the remote Vakaga region last week is also seen as marking the spill-over of the Darfur conflict.
- No information is available so far on Birao but the rebels seem willing to allow international humanitarian organizations to send a mission and assess the needs of the city’s 30,000 inhabitants.
- The first UN flight landed in Kaga Bandoro, where three weeks of fighting have driven thousands of people from their homes.

**Actions:**
- WHO participated in a rapid assessment in Kaga Bandoro: there are 1400 IDPs in the town and no basic goods in the local market. According to the regional medical officer, health centres outside the town have closed and the staff has been displaced. The local hospital has no funds nor logistic systems to ensure the supply of medicines.
- Nutritional problems as well as outbreaks can be expected (the rainy season is not over) and local partners such as Caritas and the CAR Red Cross will need support to assist the vulnerable populations.
- WHO is opening a sub office in Bossangoa which will help monitor the situation and to conduct early assessments in Kaga Bandoro.
- Support for WHO’s emergency activities was received from Finland.

![Central African Republic Map](image2)

### NIGER

**Assessments and events:**
- The cholera outbreak in Dosso, Tahoua and Diffa is abating; since 31 October, no new cases have been notified. The total number of cases reported between 1 February and 31 October is 1169 and 79 deaths, twice as many cases as in the same period in 2005.
- Since the beginning of the year, a cumulative total of 4238 cases of meningitis, including 303 deaths, have been reported. Comparisons with 2005 figures suggest an improvement in case management.
- As of 31 October, 146,881 cases of malnutrition (both moderate and severe) have been notified to the national health authorities, including 306 deaths. Between 22 and 31 October, 2267 cases of moderate malnutrition and 310 cases of severe malnutrition were reported, with no deaths.

**Actions:**
- WHO dispatched to Niger two diarrhoea kits; each kit provides drugs and supplies for the treatment of 100 cases of cholera for 3 months.
- WHO is conducting advocacy and resource mobilization in cooperation with other UN agencies. Projects have been prepared and presented to donors such as Canada and Germany.

![Niger Map](image3)
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/

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

On 30 November, the Humanitarian Action Plan 2007 for the DRC will be launched. Two main priorities are emergency crisis response and the return to autonomous management.

Assessments and events:
- In Oriental, the suspected pneumonic plague outbreak in Haut-Uele district continues. As of 7 November, local authorities had reported 1174 suspected cases including 50 deaths. Samples were analysed; however, the diagnosis of plague has not been confirmed, yet.
- In Équateur, between early August and end of September, 341 cases of jaundice, including 13 deaths, were notified.
- In Katanga, a total of 1121 cases of measles have been reported since the beginning of 2006, including 37 deaths. Insecurity interferes with routine vaccinations and causes shortages of drugs.

Actions:
- In Oriental, the provincial health authorities, WHO and MSF Switzerland carried out an investigation of the suspected plague outbreak. Disease surveillance was strengthened and systems set in place for case management, contact tracing and community sensitization.
- A WHO and the MoH team will return shortly to re-assess the situation with the local health staff and NGOs working in the affected areas.
- Together with partners, WHO works at accelerating the provision of emergency kits and essential drugs against the outbreak of jaundice in Équateur. WHO is supporting local health authorities for disease surveillance.
- In Katanga, WHO supported investigation missions and provided kits and medicines for case management in 14 health zones including those most affected by measles.
- From 9 to 21 October, the WHO Country Office developed a concept note on the health component of the joint Country Assistance Framework. Main areas of concern are maternal and child morbidity and mortality, medical and psychosocial services for victims of violence and a Minimum Service Package for primary health care, including HIV/AIDS.
- In 2006, WHO’s activities are supported by Finland and Italy. Funds were received from OCHA’s Humanitarian Fund and the CERF.

SUDAN

More information is available at: http://www.emro.who.int/sudan/

Assessments and events:
- In Southern Sudan, between 28 January and 24 September, 18 021 cases of cholera and 539 deaths have been reported. Juba has noted an exponential increase in the number of cases from 30 October with the state hospital recording 247 cases.
- In Darfur, especially in the West and North, the escalation of fighting and insecurity have forced many NGOs to reduce or cease their activities, leaving at least 100 000 persons without assistance, many caught in inaccessible areas. Up to 2 million IDPs are living in precarious camps, almost entirely dependent on external assistance.

Actions:
- In southern Sudan, WHO continues working with the Federal MoH and other UN and NGO partners in implementing control measures including strengthened surveillance, specimen collection, case management and chlorination of water.
- In 2006, contributions for WHO’s emergency activities were received from ECHO, Finland, Ireland, Norway, Switzerland, the United States as well as the CERF and the 2006 Common Humanitarian Fund.
TURKEY

Assessments and events:
- Over the last week, torrential rains caused flash floods across the country, affecting particularly the south-eastern provinces.
- As of 5 November, 39 people were reported killed, eight missing, and 988 houses had been damaged. An estimated 63 000 people have been affected.

Actions:
- The UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee Country Team has been mobilized to review needs and response.

PHILIPPINES

Assessments and events:
- On 29-30 October, typhoon “Paeng” hit the northern part of Luzon killing 32 persons and injuring 60. Fifteen are reported to be still missing. More than 68 700 households (309 600 people) in 12 provinces were affected.
- Up to 34 evacuation centres were set up to host people who had left their homes for safer grounds or whose houses were damaged or destroyed.
- There was no report of damage to health facilities.

Actions:
- WHO monitored the situation, ready to provide support to local and national health authorities if required.

INTER-AGENCY ISSUES

- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene. The next meeting of the Cluster Working Group will take place in New York on 30 November and 1 December.
- Information Management. On 7 November, the Inter-Agency Group on Information Management finalized the concept paper for the information management stock-taking exercise and discussed the development of stock-taking exercise methodology. WHO is tasked to prepare a glossary to support the work of the group.
- Central Emergency Response Fund. On 8 November, the CERF inter-agency meeting discussed the IASC Cluster Approach and reporting arrangements.
- Humanitarian Coordinators’ Induction Briefing. The last induction briefing took place on 7-9 November.
- South Asia Earthquake. On 8 November, the IASC-UNDG Taskforce updated on the Joint Programme for Relief and Recovery and measures of preparation for the coming winter.
- Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation. The second consultative inter-agency meeting on a joint Statement of Commitment or “Call to Action” on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse by UN and NGO personnel took place on 9 November. A conference on the subject will take place in New York on 4 December.
- Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. On 9 November, the Inter-Agency Working Group discussed the launch of the UN Integrated Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (UN IDDRS) scheduled to take place in New York on 8 December.
- CAP. The next IASC CAP Sub-Working Group meeting will take place on 14 November.
- Tsunami Recovery. On 15 November, the fifth and final meeting of the Global Consortium will take place in New York, with the participation of the UN Special Envoy, Former US President Clinton.
- IASC Working Group. Preparations are stepping up for the next meeting scheduled to take place in New York on 15-17 November. The meeting will discuss, among others, the humanitarian reform process, gender in emergencies, strengthening the Humanitarian Coordination System, the CERF, Integrated Missions/ Humanitarian Space and multi-dimensional peace-building missions and early warning/ action.
- Public Health Pre-Deployment Course. From 26 November to 9 December, WHO will conduct in Geneva the next public health pre-deployment course.
- Oslo Guidelines. The 2006 annual meeting of the Consultative Group on the use of Military and Civil Defense Assets (MCDA) will be held in Oslo on 27 November, with the “re-launch” of the updated Oslo Guidelines.
- MSF. On the occasion of its 25th anniversary, MSF Switzerland is organizing two days of reflection on humanitarian practices and stakes in Geneva on 4 and 5 December.
- ECHA. The UN Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs will next meet on 5 December.
- IASC Plenary. The next Plenary meeting at the level of Heads of Agency will take place on 12 December.

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

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