Each week, the World Health Organization 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.

### INDONESIA – SUMATRA EARTHQUAKE

- On 12 September a powerful earthquake measuring 8.2 on the Richter Scale struck off the coast of the Sumatra Island. Tsunami warnings were repeatedly issued and lifted for the entire Indian Ocean area including Indonesia, the Maldives, Mozambique, Sri Lanka and Thailand.
- Up to 17 deaths are reported as well as damage to power supply and communication systems in Bengkulu. OCHA reports several buildings collapsed in Padang and major damage in the island of Mentawi (off the Sumatra coast).
- Patients were evacuated from Bengkulu Hospital to field hospital tents.
- The Government has not made any request for international support so far.

**Actions**

- The MoH Crisis Centre and WHO are ready to respond with emergency supplies from the Jakarta Joint Emergency Depot.
- The IASC Country Team reviewed the information on the impact of the earthquakes, and concluded that a major international relief operation is not foreseen at this point in time. However, agencies in the country will continue to support government efforts in responding to this disaster.
- OCHA is liaising with the Government disaster response agency.
- Australia is providing an initial contribution of US$ 50 000 to support deployment of Indonesian emergency medical teams and transport critical relief items to the affected areas.

### WEST AFRICA FLOODS

- OCHA reports that floods have affected over 500 000 people in Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, The Gambia and Togo. The number of victims is much higher than in 2006, when 65 000 people had been affected at the same period, and could rise much higher as rains continue.
  - In Burkina Faso, 33 deaths and 73 injured are reported; more than 35 000 people are affected including 28 000 displaced;
  - In Ghana, more than 20 people have reportedly died and over 275 000 are affected;
  - In Liberia, an estimated 17 000 people are affected around Monrovia;
  - In Mali, more than 25 000 persons are affected including 3700 displaced;
  - In Mauritania, following the floods in Titane in August – which left over 16 000 people without safe drinking water – new floods in Barkeol and Gorgol have destroyed 1319 houses making 925 families homeless;
  - In Togo, 20 deaths and 24 injured are reported as well as up to 34 000 homeless.
  - Côte d’Ivoire (2000 people affected), Niger (7000/16 700), Senegal (3100), Sierra Leone (4500) and The Gambia (300) also reported affected population.
- In all countries destruction of homes and crops, infrastructures (bridges, dams, public buildings) as well as health facilities are reported, raising the risk of waterborne diseases. Urgent needs include tents, food, water, medicines, mosquito nets and non-food items.

**Actions**

- Governments and NGOs have begun distributing relief aid in affected areas.
- WHO is monitoring the situation and providing support and supplies (essential drugs and consumables) to affected countries where needed.
- In Ghana, regional authorities had appealed to the government, charitable organizations, religious bodies and NGOs for assistance. WHO is looking into supporting an initial assessment with funding and technical assistance, strengthening the disease surveillance and preparedness and outbreak response.
- In Liberia, the MoH, in collaboration with the WATSAN Cluster and WHO, is coordinating the health, water and sanitation response. Humanitarian organizations in collaboration with the National Disaster and Relief Commission are coordinating the overall response.
- In Mauritania, the WHO Regional Office for Africa is contributing US$ 20 000
In the Kasai Occidental, Médecins Sans Frontières Belgium has deployed clinicians, water and sanitation experts and logisticians to the area and established isolation facilities.

Assessments and events:
- In Kasai Occidental, the MoH has confirmed an outbreak of Ebola haemorrhagic fever following laboratory analysis at the Centre international de recherches médicales in Franceville, Gabon, and the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. The presence of Shigella has also been confirmed. As of 11 September, WHO is aware of 372 cases and 166 deaths.
- In North Kivu, increased fighting around Sake is making the delivery food and health assistance more difficult for aid agencies. About 35 000 to 40 000 people have fled the area, many of whom have sought refuge in neighbouring Uganda. In all, approximately 200 000 people have fled North Kivu since last December.

Actions:
- In the Kasai Occidental, the WHO Country Office, Regional Office as well as Headquarters are supporting the MoH in Kinshasa and in the field at the location of the outbreak. Additional staff, outbreak response equipment and supplies, including Personal Protective Equipment are being sent to the area. A team of national and international experts is being mobilized to implement control strategies and support outbreak field response in the province.
- A request for additional support has been sent to the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN) in the areas of clinical case management and infection control, surveillance and field epidemiology, risk communications and social mobilization, and outbreak response logistics. WHO is working with

IRAK

Assessments and events:
- Between 23 August and 6 September, 3182 cases of acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) were reported from five out of 11 districts of Sulaymaniyah Governate including nine deaths. Of these reported cases, 283 were confirmed as cholera.
- During the period from 29 July to 2 September, health authorities in Kirkuk Governate reported 3728 AWD cases and one death. Most recently, six laboratory-confirmed cases of cholera were reported from Erbil Governate.
- Because of lack of representative data, it is unclear whether the trend is increasing or declining in the affected districts of Sulaymaniyah.

Actions:
- The Government of Iraq has mobilized a multi-sectoral response with a high-level National Committee on Cholera Preparedness and Outbreak Response.
- The provincial health authorities of Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk and Erbil have initiated a number of public health control measures, including risk assessment, improving water safety and sanitation, strengthening the surveillance system for diarrhoeal disease, improving coordination and information flow, standardizing clinical case management, mobilizing medical and other essential supplies, and implementing social mobilization and health education campaigns. All public water supply systems in the affected districts have been chlorinated.
- WHO is having regular meetings with the National Committee on Cholera Preparedness and Outbreak in Baghdad.
- WHO is taking emergency measures to help the provincial health authorities contain the epidemic. A WHO assessment mission to Erbil resulted in:
  - The recruitment of a Water and Sanitation Engineer to help the concerned health authorities improve water treatment and maintain safety standards for drinking water;
  - Distribution of chlorine measurement tablets;
  - Implementation of training courses to upgrade the skills of laboratory technicians.
- WHO is helping standardize case management, organizing social mobilization and health education campaigns with more than 10 000 posters distributed.
- WHO will pre-position ten Diarrhoeal Disease Kits in Erbil.
- WHO’s emergency activities are funded by Japan and the UNDG ITF.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Assessments and events:
- In Kasai Occidental, the MoH is providing health facilities in affected areas with the necessary drugs and medical supplies and supporting investigation missions.
- In Togo, WHO supported yellow fever vaccination campaign in Kougnouhou in the Wawa health district.

Actions:
- The recruitment of a Water and Sanitation Engineer to help the concerned health authorities improve water treatment and maintain safety standards for drinking water;
- Distribution of chlorine measurement tablets;
- Implementation of training courses to upgrade the skills of laboratory technicians.

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/).
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDIAN SUB CONTINENT MONSOON</th>
<th>Assessments and events:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brahmaputra River</td>
<td>Areas of Bangladesh and India were flooded again by heavy rains over the past week. Continued heavy rain is forecasted across the region.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>In Bangladesh, 40 of the country’s 64 districts were flooded following the past several days of rain. At least ten people have died bringing the death toll of this year’s monsoon to 840. An estimated 500 000 people are displaced.</td>
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<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>In India, a second wave of flooding in the state of Assam is reported, affecting 10 million people out of 27 million. An estimated 3 million are displaced.</td>
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<td>Assam</td>
<td>In Pakistan, more than 60% of the displaced have returned to their homes the region of Sindh. Cases of acute respiratory infections, diarrhoea, skin infections and malaria are detected in rain-affected districts. Increased numbers of AWD have been reported in the District of Dadu.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>Actions:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>In Bangladesh, WHO continues monitoring the ongoing flood crises providing direct technical assistance to the national health authorities in coordinating the on-going emergency response operation. WHO is enhancing disease outbreaks monitoring through the nationwide Surveillance Medical Officers programme. An additional grant of US$ 6 million in emergency assistance, channelled through FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and WFP. WHO is providing emergency medical drugs, kits and equipment as well as training on health education (safe drinking water, hand washing, personal hygiene and sanitation).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sylhet</td>
<td>In India, WHO is monitoring the health situation in the flood-affected districts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>In Pakistan, WHO is coordinating with health authorities in affected districts. WHO teams in Balochistan and Sindh are assessing the condition of health facilities including drug availability and the presence of skilled birth attendants as well as drinking water supplies and malnutrition rates.</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>WHO’s emergency response in flood-affected countries is supported by Norway through the donation of kits. WHO is also using its regular country budget to respond to emergency needs.</td>
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<tr>
<th>DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF KOREA</th>
<th>Assessments and events:</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Following last month’s floods, thousands of people require continued aid.</td>
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<td>Recent rains and ensuing water contamination caused by flood damages are causing an increase in the number of patients. Hospitals in North and South Pyongan Province, and South Hamgyung Province are overflowing with patients suffering from acute diarrhoea, while cases of eye disease are rising.</td>
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<td>In Sineuiju, pressure on the supply of liquid medicines like glucose is growing.</td>
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<td>Actions:</td>
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<td>A Joint Evaluation mission is under way (8-15 September) for the Republic of Korea funded Mother and Child Project. The mission emphasizes WHO’s commitment to support DPRK at all levels of the Organization, reviews implementation modalities and recommends mechanisms to improve the effectiveness of the project for the year 2007.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A UN interagency visit to Pongsan County in North Hwanghae Province showed an increase in the number of diarrhoea cases. Monitoring of supplies needs to be strengthened, and information sharing between international agencies and the Government needs to be more regular.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australia is supporting WHO with essential medicines and other health needs for North Korea to the value of US$500 000. A US$ 1million pledge for emergency assistance was received from the Republic of Korea.</td>
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### CHAD

**Assessments and events:**
- In Dar Tama Department, ongoing intercommunity conflict is causing new displacements. The Government has pre-positioned food supplies to support affected populations but access is difficult. The Government is looking towards international partners and UN agencies for assistance.
- In the east, the diseases surveillance system set up by WHO continues providing regular information on the health status of both local and displaced populations. Since the beginning of the year, the main conditions include acute respiratory syndrome (78,901 reported cases), acute watery diarrhoea (45,556) and malaria (22,917) followed by bloody diarrhoea (12,600) and hepatitis E (1878).

**Actions:**
- After the recent reports of two confirmed cases of polio, mass vaccination campaigns are being organized; a second round of national immunization days against polio have just been completed in Ouaddaï region. The WHO sub office in Abéché provided logistic support to the campaign.
- WHO participated in the CAP 2008 workshop in Abéché – staff from headquarters and the Country Office participated to help identify priority needs for the crisis-affected populations.
- Emergency activities are supported by Italy, ECHO and the CERF.

### HORN OF AFRICA

**Assessments and events:**
- In Ethiopia, WHO Emergency Humanitarian Action (EHA) Ethiopia Programme reports six out of nine regions reported AWD cases by the end of August 2007, with 2,037 cases and 14 deaths reported nationally.
- In Somalia, ongoing fighting in Bakara market in Mogadishu is impeding access to hospitals and overwhelming other hospitals with large number of injured.

**Actions:**
- In Ethiopia, routine surveillance of epidemic prone diseases (polio, avian influenza, Rift Valley fever, measles, meningitis and AWD) is ongoing. WHO is providing financial support to the Federal MoH to respond to the ongoing AWD outbreak.
- In Somalia, the 2008 Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) workshop held on 3-4 September concluded that health and nutrition indicators need drastic improvement.
- WHO positioned three trauma kits in Wajid and three in Mogadishu together with one New Emergency Health kit (including medicines, disposables and instruments for 10,000 people during a three-month period).
- WHO conducted refresher training on reproductive health care at the Sudan Red Crescent Society (SRCS) training facilities in Baidoa. WHO supports World Vision in running a mobile clinic; the five qualified nurses and three auxiliary nurses provide basic health care to IDP camps around Baidoa five days a week.
- WHO activities are supported by the CERF, Canada, Italy, Norway, Sweden, the United States and Finland for Somalia, cluster coordination, and by the CERF and the local Humanitarian Response Fund in Ethiopia.

### SUDAN

**Assessments and events:**
- In the wake of severe flooding over the past two weeks, longer, heavy rains are forecast across the south, greater Darfur and the east of Sudan. Flash floods are anticipated in these regions. The death toll of this year’s flood has risen to 131.
- Since April, 1,281 people have fallen ill with AWD spread by flood waters and 61 people have died from AWD in the past two months.
- In Gedaref, the State MoH reported setting up seven Cholera Treatment Centres to contain the outbreak of cholera; since mid-April, more than 750 cases and 50 deaths have been reported in the State.

**Actions:**
- A proposed sectoral strategy for scaling up public health interventions in Darfur was presented by WHO to all sectoral partners in Khartoum on 9 September.
- ADG/HAC, DRD/EMRO and Director HAC/REC visited Juba to discuss collaboration between the Government of South Sudan and the Government of...
UN News Service reports renewed clashes between Sudanese Government Forces and Darfur rebel groups in the south of the Darfur region.

The Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS) for 2008-2012, which helps strengthen WHO activities and effectiveness in Sudan, has been agreed upon.

- National Unity in emergency public health related matters.
- In response to the floods, WHO as sector lead for Health and Nutrition, consolidated a flash appeal across southern Sudan, addressing various proposed emergency intervention in flood-affected areas.
- In order to ensure availability of life saving supplies at state’s level, WHO is procuring substantive quantity of anti-rabies vaccines, tetanus immunoglobulin and snake anti-venom for use during and after the floods.
- In West Darfur, WHO supported the Federal MoH and the Sudan Water Commission in preparing and designing a chlorination programme for the eight boreholes that provide water to El Geneina town.
- In southern Sudan, WHO prepared a work plan for the capacity building of the Directorate of Pharmaceutical Services in Juba and selected regions. This will include the development of guidelines, training, as well as the provision of office, IT as well as communication equipment. Implementation of the work plan will be supported by the Italian Fund. WHO organized and funded the training of four pharmacists in pharmaceutical regulation and collaboration with the Jordan Pharmaceutical regulation.
- In 2007, contributions for WHO’s emergency activities were received from ECHO, Ireland, Finland, the CERF and the Common Humanitarian Fund.

**INTER-AGENCY ISSUES**

- **Gender and Humanitarian Action.** The IASC Gender Sub-Working Group met on 5 September. A face to face meeting of the Gender SWG will be held in Geneva on 18-19 October.
- **Clusters.**
  - **Emergency Shelter Cluster** workshops on emergency management is being held in Skovde, Sweden, 11-20 September.
  - The online Survey for **Independent Evaluation of the Cluster** is ongoing.
  - A face to face meeting of the **Global Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Cluster** will take place in Geneva on 25-26 September.
  - The next face to face meeting of the **Global Health Cluster** will take place in Nairobi, around 26 November.
- **Humanitarian Reform workshops** will be held in Niger Dakar, Senegal (regional refresher) and Sudan. Workshops are also planned to take place in Afghanistan and Haiti.
- The Inter-Agency Working Group on **Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration** will meet shortly.

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

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