

Health Action in Crises Highlights No. 288, 08 - 21 Feb 2010

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Each week, the World Health Organization Health Action in Crises in Geneva produces information highlights on critical health-related activities in countries where there are 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 operational use and does not reflect any official position of the WHO Secretariat.

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For more information, see WHO web site, and the latest situation reports on the PAHO/WHO web site.

- On 17 February, the WHO Representative in Haiti and MSF's International Council President briefed the Humanitarian Liaison Working Group in Geneva on the health situation and the work of the Health Cluster.
- The ERC visited Haiti and the Dominican Republic on 11–14 February. The ERC asked Global Cluster lead agencies to boost their teams to provide sustained coordination capacity on the ground.
- The "who does what where" matrix developed by the Health Cluster includes information on all members. Over 390 national and international organizations have registered with the Health Cluster.
- WHO/PAHO is acting as the Health Cluster lead while Save the Children is leading the Health Cluster in Leogane and co-leading it in Jacmel with the MoH

Assessments and Events

- According to revised estimates, 212 000 people were killed and over 300 000 injured in the earthquake. More than 1.2 million people are living in temporary camps, making the installation of emergency shelters and sanitation facilities before the rainy season a top priority.
- The Government has approved the terms of reference of the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA). It will take place from 18 February to 12 March.

- The MoH will complete a national plan for disability by 1 March. The plan will address issues such as rehabilitation centres, prosthetics, orthotics and accessible structures. The MoH also announced that medicines and medical products will be provided free of charge to all public health facilities nationwide until 12 April.

- The surveillance system reports acute respiratory infections as the main cause of morbidity. Malaria and dengue are expected to become health concerns with the upcoming rainy season.

- The pre-crisis global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate was estimated at 4.5% for the affected areas, with severe acute malnutrition at 0.8%. At these levels, an estimated 17 500 children are suffering from acute malnutrition, of whom 3100 are severely malnourished and in need of life-saving assistance. Assessments are under way to determine post-crisis GAM levels in highly affected areas.

Actions

- WHO/PAHO is working with national health authorities on assessing mental health to develop a preliminary plan of action for the short, medium and long term improvement of mental health services in the country.

- WHO/PAHO is procuring ten mobile clinics, in response to the needs identified by the Haitian Government. The clinics' design, location and areas activities are being decided.

- PAHO has a stock of 15 000 long-lasting impregnated bed nets for hospitals and health care centres. Priority will be given to pregnant women or mothers with children under five.

- WHO/PAHO manages PROMESS, Haiti's Central Procurement Agency for drugs and medical supplies. Medicines and supplies received as donations shall be distributed at no cost to public health facilities through PROMESS. Such donations shall conform to the quality standards established by WHO/PAHO.

- In order to support the emergency, WHO/PAHO has deployed more than 60 international experts on disaster management, logistics, epidemiology, surveillance, communicable disease control and water and sanitation, among others. WHO/HQ has sent staff from HAC and other technical departments to support logistics, communication, fund raising and resources mobilization, health sector assessments and recovery planning.

- In the [revised Flash Appeal](#) launched on 18 February, WHO and health partners are seeking US\$134 million for the health sector, including US\$53 million by WHO/PAHO. Health sector activities focus on:

- health sector coordination including needs assessments, monitoring and evaluation;
- outbreak control and disease surveillance;

- water supply and environmental health;
- reactivation of basic health care services;
- treatment and rehabilitation of injured patients;
- provision of essential drugs and medical supplies.

- Funds and in-kind donations to support WHO/PAHO's activities in Haiti have been received from Eisai Co. Ltd. and Canada, Italy, Japan, Monaco, Spain, the UK, the United States as well as the CERF.