



# DCD Bulletin

Division of Communicable Disease Control

## DCD Bulletin

This quarterly bulletin presents important news, events, publications and announcements from various programmes of the Division of Communicable Disease Control in the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean. For any queries or submission of material, please write to: DCD@emro.who.int, inserting "DCD bulletin" into the subject line.

## Issue highlights

- Latest regional report on HIV/AIDS launched
- Somalia progress on measles
- Morocco gets malaria-free status
- Floods in Pakistan

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## WHO does better than WHO?

Nowadays, WHO is often asked about its comparative advantage over other agencies. WHO has 193 Member States and strong governance in the form of the World Health Assembly and Regional Committees. In addition to its headquarters, it has 147 country offices and six regional offices; all offices are institutionally connected and over 8000 public health experts work for the Organization. None of the other agencies have this structure or capacity. However, in terms of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria care the world is dramatically changing.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (GF) disbursed US\$ 5 billion from 2008 to 2009. This amount was almost 10 times higher than the Organization's budget to achieve Strategic Objective 2 "To combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria" for the same year (US\$ 541 million). More strikingly, the GF amount is larger than the entire budget of WHO (US\$ 4.3 billion) for that biennium. Some institutions, even UN partners, are now bigger than WHO in countries. In one country in the Region, a principle GF recipient has recruited 47 technical and administrative staff to work on GF grants; the WHO office in that country only has 14 technical and administrative staff to achieve Strategic Objective 2. How can we maintain a comparative advantage under these conditions?

One solution lies in countries. I recently attended a global meeting on tuberculosis drug development.

Researchers reported new tuberculosis drugs may finally be available in a few years and representatives of all countries agreed that before the introduction of new drugs and treatment countries would first rely on WHO guidelines. I was truly uplifted to witness the trust and respect that countries have for WHO as an Organization. Countries' expectation of WHO are high. We need to identify what we can do better and what we should do better, and continue to do it better than others. Critical but strategic thinking is needed more than ever. *Dr Akihiro Seita, Coordinator, TB, AIDS and Malaria, WHO/EMRO.*



*Globally, 700 000 women die from tuberculosis every year; this disease kills more women than do all causes of maternal mortality combined. Case-fatality rates seem to be higher in women than in men, and women are more often diagnosed with extra pulmonary tuberculosis. Lancet, June 12, 2010.*

## Programme news

### AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases

#### Latest regional report on HIV/AIDS launched

The comprehensive report "Characterizing the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Middle East and North Africa: time for strategic action", which provides the latest evidence and data on the HIV epidemic in 23 countries located within the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region and the UNAIDS Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region, has just been

released. The report was produced jointly by the World Bank, UNAIDS and WHO. In order to share its findings and to mobilize political commitment and donor support, a two-day meeting was held in Dubai in June. The meeting was attended by high-level representatives of governments, the UN, civil society, the private sector and donors.

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## Programme news (cont.)

### New global health sector strategy for HIV/AIDS, 2011–2015

A global consultative process on “*The Global Health Sector Strategy for HIV/AIDS, 2011–2015*” has been launched now with a broad range of constituencies including government, nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, academia and UN and development partners. In addition to the global online consultation taking place from 16 July to 31 August, 2010, consultations have been planned within countries of the Region through early October 2010. The strategy aims to: (i) set global goals for the health sector response to HIV/AIDS; (2) guide national HIV responses; and (iii) provide a framework for concerted WHO action at global, regional and country levels and across all relevant WHO departments over the next five years. Access the online consultation at:

[http://www.who.int/hiv/aboutdept/strategy\\_consultation/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/hiv/aboutdept/strategy_consultation/en/index.html).

*The number of reported cases of measles has declined by more than 80% in Somalia.*



### Vaccine Preventable Diseases and Immunization

#### Good news from war-torn Somalia

Immunization coverage in Somalia has increased from a historical low of 30% to over 50%, with the number of reported cases of measles declining by more than 80%. The war-torn country has, since 2009, implemented three rounds of Child Health Days, which deliver a package of interventions on measles, polio, maternal and neonatal tetanus and other important child health problems. More than a million children are reached with the above interventions in each round. Planned, implemented and evaluated by ministries, WHO and UNICEF, Child Health Days are conducted in every village for five days every six months with the assistance of over 27 000 volunteers. So amidst the civil war in Somalia, local communities, with the assistance of WHO and UNICEF and the political leadership of local health authorities, continue to deliver public health.

### Control of Tropical Diseases and Zoonosis

#### Training on new therapy for trypanosomiasis in Sudan

Training on ‘Nifurtimox-eflornithine combination therapy for human African trypanosomiasis’ was

conducted in Yambio, southern Sudan, in June. The training was attended by 23 people from local hospitals. This new treatment protocol, which has been effective since 25 May 2010, represents a major advance in terms of simplifying the treatment (12 infusions instead of 56), and decreasing cost and relapse rate.

#### Regional training on cutaneous leishmaniasis in Tunisia, Tunisia

Twenty-two people from all over the Eastern Mediterranean Region converged in Tunis, Tunisia, in May/June to attend a 12-day regional training on ‘Epidemiology of cutaneous leishmaniasis.’ Organized in collaboration with the Pasteur Institute, the course led to the development of standardized data collection forms, surveillance indicators and a data analysis plan for the regional leishmaniasis programme. Refresher contents on the basics of surveillance programmes and evaluation of their performance were also provided.

### Vector-borne Disease Control

#### Oman embarks on serious path to implementing integrated vector management (IVM)

With Oman proactively pursuing activities leading to the implementation of integrated vector management, the number of countries in the Region implementing IVM has risen to 10, following its endorsement by the Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean five years ago. The Ministry of Health of Oman recently requested a WHO team to assist in data analysis of the national vector control needs assessment and to draft a strategic plan for implementation of IVM and sound management of public health pesticides. A five-year strategic plan was developed in collaboration with the Directorate of Malaria Eradication and in consultation with an established national intersectoral steering committee for IVM. WHO Regional Office will follow up with Oman on the progress and implementation of the strategic plan.

#### Time to think about recycling insecticide-treated bednets

The widespread adoption of long-lasting insecticide-treated bednets (LLINs) has sparked concern about the environmental impacts of

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## Programme news (cont.)

these millions of nets if they are not disposed of or recycled in an environmentally-efficient manner. Pilot studies to identify and assess the feasibility of environmentally-sound options for collection, recycling and disposal of LLINs are now being carried out in Kenya, Tanzania and Madagascar. It is time that Member States in the Region seriously started thinking about this issue. Concerns related to the recycling of LLINs are not only as a result of environmental factors but are also related to health impacts. The current discussions and pilot studies are an initiative of the Vector Control Programme at the Global Malaria Programme at WHO headquarters. In the Eastern Mediterranean Region 40 million people are protected by LLINs.

### Stop Tuberculosis

#### Global Fund Round 10 proposal development and peer review workshop

A multicountry workshop on proposal preparation and peer review for Global Fund Round 10 grant was held in Cairo in July 2010. Technical teams from the AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Stop TB programmes and the Division of Health Systems and Services Development, aided by expert consultant reviewers, guided country teams on improving their respective grant proposals. Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and countries from the WHO European Region participated in this four-day activity organized by the Regional Office, UNAIDS and WHO headquarters.

#### Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries prepare proposal for GLC assistance on multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB)

A four-day workshop on joint preparation of the GCC application to the Green Light Committee (GLC) mechanism for assistance on MDR-TB was held in Oman in June. The workshop was supported by the Government of Oman and facilitated by WHO Regional Office and headquarters. Participants from member countries of the GCC jointly developed a draft application and agreed to ensure a joint approach to MDR-TB management among member countries of the GCC. The workshop also recognized the advantages of procurement of anti-drug resistant tuberculosis medicines through the GLC/Global Drug Facility mechanism.

#### Eastern Mediterranean partnership to Stop TB celebrates Ramadan with tuberculosis patients

The Eastern Mediterranean Partnership to Stop TB—a

coalition of individuals, media, public and private health sectors and civil society—has issued a call to celebrate the holy month of Ramadan with tuberculosis patients and their families with donations and charity. Through a letter from the Chair of the Partnership's board, all national partnerships and national tuberculosis programmes have been requested to organize fund-raising *iftar* dinners and *zakat* donation activities.

### Malaria Control and Elimination

#### Director of Global Malaria Programme visits the Regional Office

Dr Robert Newman, the Director of the Global Malaria Programme, paid a visit to the WHO Regional Office in Cairo in July. The visit focused on the three key areas of joint resource mobilization activities, the strengthening of malaria surveillance and monitoring and evaluation, and operational research. Dr Newman's visit was marked by endorsement of the name of the unit being changed from Roll Back Malaria to Malaria Control and Elimination (MCE). This was done to reflect the current scope of the unit's work in cognizance of the vision of malaria elimination in the Region by 2020.

#### Training workshop on evaluation of malaria programme of Iraq

The Regional Office conducted a training workshop in Amman, Jordan, in June, for an assessment of the national malaria programme of Iraq, based on previously developed guidelines. Twelve nationals selected from the malaria programme at national and governorate levels as well as from universities selected to be trained to conduct the assessment. The assessment exercise is expected to be finalized by the end of 2010, and based on the results of that, the updated strategy for the next five years will be developed.

### Morocco gets malaria-free certification

Morocco is the second country after the United Arab Emirates to have been added to the official register of areas where malaria elimination has been achieved. WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan presented Dr Yasmina Baddou, HE the Minister of Health of Morocco, with a letter certifying Morocco as free from malaria.

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*Morocco is the second country after the United Arab Emirates where malaria elimination has been achieved.*

## Programme news (cont.)

The presentation was made in May during the World Health Assembly. This makes Morocco the second country to have attained malaria-free status since WHO certification procedures, abandoned in the 1980s, were re-initiated in 2004.

### Mock workshop on malaria proposal development in Senegal

A mock technical review panel workshop on malaria proposal development for Global Fund (GF) Round 10 was held in Senegal in June/July. The purpose of the exercise was to conduct both an expert and peer review of GF Round 10 malaria proposals from participating countries. Country representatives from Somalia and Sudan participated in the workshop. The participants worked on draft proposals as group work and plenary sessions with facilitators from various agencies.

### Floods in Pakistan cause widespread devastation

WHO Regional Office has activated both regional as well as country strategic health operations centres (SHOCs) to ensure a coordinated response to the humanitarian crisis that continues to unfold in Pakistan, where floods began in July 2010 following heavy monsoon rains. The rains hit almost all parts of the country, causing devastating flash floods and resulting in

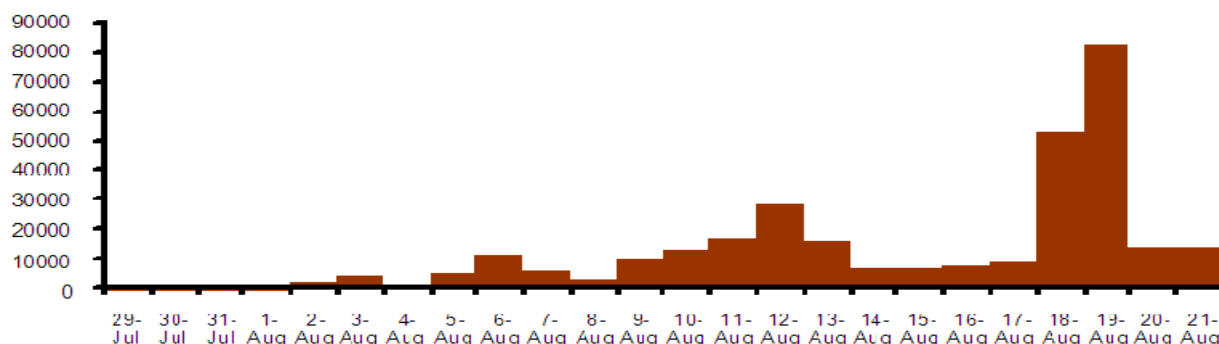
significant damage to human life, livestock and property. Seventy-four districts in four provinces have been affected by the floods; the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of the country is the worst-affected, along with Balochistan, Sindh and Punjab (further details are accessible at:

[http://www.emro.who.int/eha/crisis\\_pakistan\\_floods\\_2010.htm](http://www.emro.who.int/eha/crisis_pakistan_floods_2010.htm)).



Number of acute diarrhoea cases reported from the flood affected districts of Pakistan, 29 July - 21 August 2010

No of cases reported



Between 29 July to 21 August, a total of 2 394 492 patients' consultations were reported from affected districts. Of these consultations, 314 814 cases of acute diarrhoea (13% of total consultations), 317 450 cases of acute respiratory infection (13% of total consultations), 421 198 cases of skin infections (18% of total consultations) and 53 707 cases of suspected malaria (2% of total consultations) were reported from the flood affected districts of Pakistan.

## Publications

### Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal August 2010

Twelve countries of the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region are represented in the latest edition of the Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal. This issue features two articles on different aspects of HIV/AIDS. It also contains a study carried out on students in Yemen, describing their knowledge and attitude towards HIV/AIDS and focusing primarily on stigmatization of people with the infection (further details are posted at [www.emro.who.int](http://www.emro.who.int)).

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