

## HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. The Ministry of Health reports that 90 000 outpatients and 10 000 inpatients have been treated in the cyclone-affected areas till 18 May 2008. There have been 2887 mild and 124 severe diarrhoea cases. In a population of 1.5 million, approximately 200 diarrhoea cases per day is within the range seen in previous years.**
- 2. The Ministry of Health is focusing on cross-sectoral prevention measures, such as ensuring clean water, food and shelter, to reduce the risk of communicable disease outbreaks, as water-borne diseases routinely peak in the months of May and June every year.**
- 3. The Ministry of Health has invited health cluster partners to establish and support the surveillance system. The sources of information will extend to the community and not be limited to health workers, in order to strengthen surveillance work and rumour verification.**

## HEALTH ASSESSMENT & SITUATION UPDATE

- The Ministry of Health reports that:
  - Ninety thousand outpatients and 10 000 inpatients have been treated till 18 May 2008.
  - Across the affected areas, 2887 mild and 124 severe diarrhoea cases have been reported. In a population of 1.5 million, approximately 200 diarrhoea cases per day is within the range seen in previous years.
  - Two central-level assessment teams have visited the affected areas. One team was for emergency assistance, the other for logistics and supplies. The teams provided medical care, transferred severely injured patients by helicopter, and provided water and sanitation emergency equipment, including emergency health kits and bleaching powder for water chlorination.
  - Three medical ships with 34 doctors are providing health services in the delta area. Another 390 mobile teams are in the field to improve access to health services.
  - Government Health professionals are also providing services in 12 'forefront', 'middle' and 'rear' relief camps.
  - The Ministry of Health has assigned mental health professionals to some areas. Mental health specialists from Thailand have also been deployed.
  - The Ministry of Health is focusing on cross-sectoral prevention measures, such as providing clean water, food and shelter, to reduce the risk of communicable disease outbreaks, as water-borne diseases routinely peak in the months of May and June every year.
  - Polio and measles immunization in temporary shelters continue. Sufficient measles vaccines are in stock.

- In Dedaye township, the hospital is functioning even though its roof was blown away. All eight rural health centres and 20 sub-centres were badly damaged according to an INGO report.
- As reports of damaged buildings continue to come in, the government has clarified that it is responsible for the rehabilitation of public buildings, but would welcome support from INGOs and other partners for damaged equipment, instruments and other supplies.
- The Ministry of Health is working closely with UN agencies, local and international NGOs, the private sector and the donor community to ensure that services and supplies reach those who need it without delay.
- International medical teams from Thailand, India, China and Laos are now working in the affected areas with national health professionals.

## **HEALTH CLUSTER RESPONSE**

### **1. Supplies**

- WHO has provided more than 65 metric tones of medical drugs, supplies and equipment. This includes more than 3 million tablets of various antibiotics, 15 emergency health kits to cover 450 000 people for a month, 20 000 insecticide treated bed-nets, 15 000 tubes of mosquito repellent cream, 12 800 kg of bleaching powder and 36 000 tablets of chlorine tablets.
- IOM has received 10 000 impregnated mosquito bed-nets.
- CESVI has distributed five emergency kits A and one emergency kit B.
- MoH has invited health cluster partners to assist in transportation of midwives to outlying areas for immunization activities.

### **2. Medical Care and Human Resources**

- WHO, UNICEF, IFRC and ICRC have issued a joint statement on appropriate feeding for infants and young children, cautioning about unnecessary use of milk products, to promote appropriate child feeding practices. The agencies have expressed concerns about milk powder and milk formula being distributed in shelters in the affected areas.
- CESVI is supportive preventive and curative care in Dedaye township, Maternal and Child Health services in four rural health centres and eight sub-centres.
- Health partners are to train up to 2000 volunteers in the field of disease prevention and surveillance of communicable diseases.

### **3. Mental health**

- Health Cluster reports have expressed concern on the referral of complicated mental health cases.
- UNICEF has started 'child-friendly corners' in some areas to provide support to children in some affected areas.
- WHO, which has an ongoing programme for mental health in the country, is developing a plan of action. The agency has already distributed guidelines in this subject, translated into the local language.
- IOM also plans to have an active role in providing mental health and psychosocial support.

#### **4. Surveillance**

- The Ministry of Health has invited health cluster partners to support and participate in the disease surveillance system in the affected areas.
- The sources of information for disease surveillance and rumour verification will extend to the community and not be limited to health workers, in order to strengthen surveillance work.
- Health partners have also been requested to share information with the township medical officer, public health teams, and regional surveillance officers who are collecting and coordinating such information.

#### **HEALTH COORDINATION**

- The Ministry of Health has been working with UNICEF on health promotion and education activities and has invited more material from health cluster partners.
- In Labutta the health cluster and the water and sanitation cluster meet every alternate day, while the food cluster meets every day.
- Inter-agency partners have agreed to convey health education messages during food distribution.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

- The Health Cluster's plans encompass the relief and recovery phase and are being finalized.
- WHO and health partners will conduct in-depth assessment of the health situation in coordination with the Ministry of Health.
- WHO continues to advocate with the donors to mobilize stronger support for the health sector. Till 18 May 2008, USD 6.2 million has been mobilized. The Flash Appeal will be revised and readjusted during the coming weeks as assessments bring in more clear information on needs.