



7 April 2024, Sana'a, Yemen – All people have the right to health. And no matter where they live, they should be able to access and afford quality health care when they need it. The prolonged conflict in Yemen has left half of the population in need of health aid .

Vulnerable groups continue to bear the brunt of the crisis. Such groups include internally displaced people, children, women, elderly people, people with disabilities and mental health conditions, marginalized communities, and people affected by conflict-related injuries.

“The challenges that people in Yemen have to face cannot be described. Children who are referred to nutrition wards are only there because of prolonged starvation. The health system is fragile and faces difficulty in meeting the increasing demands,” said Dr Arturo Pesigan, WHO Representative in Yemen. “I feel for all the parents and caregivers who have to see their children getting ill in front of their eyes.”

Yemen faces a double burden of disease and armed conflict, and 17.8 million people in the country require health assistance. Of this number, 24% are women, who need access to diverse

medical and reproductive health services. Children account for 50% of those in need, including 540 000 children aged under 5 years who require life-saving treatment for severe wasting – 10% of whom have severe acute malnutrition with medical complications and need highly specialized inpatient care. Inequalities are revealed in the high levels of malnutrition among mothers and children. Undernutrition remains a major public health crisis .

The multihazard risk profile for Yemen, the development of which WHO has supported, identifies 6 priority hazards with a high likelihood and potentially high public health impact: armed conflict, cholera, dengue, floods and cyclones, malaria and measles.

As the world marks the 76th World Health Day, WHO continues to support the health authorities to address the gaps, all the while working to strengthen the health system amid the conflict.

Through strong partnerships in 2023, WHO supported 245 health facilities to remain functional, providing 6.4 million outpatient consultations and reaching about 2.5 million people. Some 1.2 million children aged under 5 years were vaccinated against polio and another 1.1 million children (aged 6 months–4 years) were vaccinated against measles.

In addition, 4000 tonnes of medicines, equipment, medical furniture, information technology devices and other health technologies worth US\$ 42.63 million in total were distributed to 470 health facilities across Yemen.

“Every number reflects a positive impact on people’s lives. These are men, women and children who were provided with life-saving services and were not turned away,” said Dr Pesigan. “A multisectoral approach is needed today to promote health and well-being while addressing determinants of health and risk factors. But if this is not combined with peace, true development may be difficult to achieve. Through peace, Yemen can start to heal.”

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About WHO

Since 1948, the World Health Organization (WHO) has been the United Nations agency dedicated to advancing health for all, so that everyone, everywhere can attain the highest level of health. WHO leads global efforts to expand universal health coverage, direct and coordinate the world's responses to health emergencies and connect nations, partners and people to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable.

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