

Islamabad, 4 September, 2010 – WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Dr Hussein A. Gezairy arrives today in Islamabad on a mission to assess the health impact of Pakistan's floods, take stock of the health sector response and commit WHO's continuing support to immediate and longer-term health relief and recovery efforts.

"The health threats posed by this disaster are immense and while the response to date has managed to provide health care to more than 4.4 million people, much more clearly needs to be done to save the lives and reduce the suffering of many flood-affected people," said Dr Hussein Gezairy, the Regional Director of WHO's Eastern Mediterranean office. During his visit, Dr Gezairy will visit areas hard hit by the flooding, where large-scale population displacement, destroyed and damaged health facilities, and poor hygiene and sanitation conditions fan the threat of water- and vector-borne diseases and severely impact on the delivery of routine health care.

Dr Gezairy will also assess the progress of WHO's operations in Pakistan and the activities of the Health Cluster network of national and international health partners who are working together to respond to the massive needs throughout the country. WHO has provided medicines capable of treating around 3.7 million people and has established coordination hubs in Islamabad, Quetta, Peshawar, Multan, Sukkur and Hyderabad. More than 20 international staff have been deployed to Pakistan from within WHO's global network. WHO has also supported the deployment of international health experts to help deliver health care services within fixed health facilities or mobile medical teams.

Dr Gezairy will meet Federal, Provincial and District health officials during his visit, along with United Nations partners, Health Cluster members and donor governments supporting relief efforts.

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