12 April 2018 – The Ministry of Health of Somalia has announced 112 new cases of cholera, and zero deaths for week 13 (26 March to 1 April) of 2018. The cumulative total number of cases is 1876 including 9 associated deaths (case fatality rate 0.5%) since the beginning of the current outbreak in December 2017. Out of 104 stool samples collected this year, 32 have tested positive for the presence of vibrio cholerae bacteria.

The outbreak is said to have started in Beledweyne in Hiran region from where it spread to communities along the River Shabelle, and is attributed to contaminated water from unprotected water sources. New cases are being reported in Banadir, Hiran, Lower Jubba and Middle Shabelle regions. The number of cases for children under 2 has dropped to 38% of the reported cases.

Cholera in endemic in Somalia, however, in 2017 a major cholera outbreak affected many communities, and recorded 79 172 reported cases including 1159 associated deaths. Oral cholera vaccination (OCV) campaigns were conducted in cholera hotspot areas in response to the outbreak, and successfully limited the number of new cases.

WHO continues to coordinate the planning and implementation of response activities with the Ministry of Health, WASH and Health Cluster partners, and local health authorities. WHO recently concluded a week-long training for 22 surveillance officers on the use of the electronic disease early warning alert and response network (EWARN) to record and report alerts of epidemic- and pandemic-prone diseases.

Additional support provided includes support for clinical care delivery, and case management in cholera treatment centres; surveillance; deployment of rapid response teams; engagement of community health workers; provision of medical supplies; health and hygiene education in affected communities; and distribution of hygiene kits.

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