

Syrian Arab Republic

Situation Report # 2

Date: 14 March 2012

Highlights

- The UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos and the Syrian authorities have discussed the possibility of an interagency assessment mission in partnership with the UN country team.
- WHO will participate with other UN agencies in the interagency assessment mission.
- Due to limited access to the affected areas, WHO has partnered with a number of local nongovernmental organizations to support the continuation of basic health services.



WHO update: health activities

- WHO has received approval from the authorities to conduct a health facilities assessment of hospitals and primary health care facilities. The first stage of the assessment will cover four governorates: Darea, Rural Damascus, Homs and Der Al Zoor. This assessment will target primary health care and public hospitals and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent.
- Planning for the UN interagency assessment mission is underway; tools and methodology are being finalized. The assessment will take approximately 10 days and cover most governorates.
- For the vaccination programme sufficient vaccines are currently being procured for 2012. However, there are concerns regarding access to the target population to be immunized in the affected areas, as well as the disruption of the cold chain due to disruption to electricity and fuel supplies.

Health response

WHO response

- WHO is scaling up its response to the emergency in the Syrian Arab Republic. A rapid response team comprising an emergency coordinator and public health officer have been deployed to Damascus to

support coordination within the health sector and strengthen health information management activities.

- WHO is planning a health facility assessment together with partners. They are together finalizing the concept note for the assessment. They are currently finalizing the methodology and tool for the assessment. The assessment will be conducted in phases – the first phase will cover the following four affected governorates: Darea, Homs, Rural Damscus and Der Al Zoor.
- Together with the Ministry of Health and partners, WHO is developing a first aid workshop for volunteers of nongovernmental organizations and local community groups. WHO is also looking into the possibility of organizing other training activities, such as for mental health.
- The health facility assessment has been put on hold awaiting the conclusion of the interagency assessment, which is due to begin Sunday 18 March 2012.

Health needs

- Requests from local nongovernmental organizations have been received, mainly for life-saving medicines, trauma kits, international emergency humanitarian kits and noncommunicable disease kits.

Challenges

- Due to limited access to the affected areas, it is difficult to obtain updated information regarding the health status of the affected population and to identify the real health needs.

Coordination

- WHO conducted a coordination meeting on 7 March 2012 for the health sector at its premises, in coordination with the emergency preparedness team of the Ministry of Health, in order to discuss future health assessments and needs.
- WHO also conducted on 7 March 2012 a meeting with the UN Health Technical Group and Syrian Arab Red Crescent on the current health situation in the country.

Donors and funding

WHO urgently requires funds to:

- coordinate health actions, including needs assessments and health information management
- scale up the management of injuries, trauma care and medical evacuation, including the upgrading of medical facilities with equipment and supplies
- support the continuation of health care services in affected areas
- strengthen the disease early warning and response system
- support health status monitoring and implement appropriate public health measures for the migrant/refugee population in the border areas.

Each of these activities will include the deployment of staff and the provision of supplies and equipment to implement the tasks.

For more information

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