

28 October 2021 — WHO has delivered around 17 metric tons of life-saving medical supplies and equipment to Kabul, with support from ECHO. The shipment, worth US\$ 700 000, arrived on the EU Humanitarian Air Bridge flight and is a part of WHO's ongoing emergency response to ensure health facilities across the country are adequately stocked to continue delivering essential health services.

"WHO is sparing no effort to keep health services running," said Dr Dapeng Luo, WHO Representative in Afghanistan. "Replenishing supplies and equipment at health facilities is a major focus for WHO because a shortage can bring urgently needed lifesaving treatments to a standstill in many provinces. We thank ECHO for its timely support in delivering the WHO medical cargo to Kabul and for its solidarity with the Afghan people," said Dr Luo.

The supplies will be distributed to 17 health facilities across 10 provinces and will cover a wide range of health services. This includes the provision of essential medicines for at least 50 000 people, pregnancy care and childbirth services for 59 500 women, and treatment of at least 3140 trauma cases and 55 400 people suffering from noncommunicable diseases such as hypertension, mental health issues, diabetes, bronchial asthma, ischaemic heart diseases and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

The supplies will also be delivered to the centre for the treatment of gender-based violence, housed in the Jamhuriat Hospital, Kabul, to support the delivery of medical aid for gender-based violence emergency cases associated with poisoning, head trauma, wounds, burns, and lacerations.

"Women and children are extremely vulnerable at this very difficult time. We are doing everything we can to prioritize the delivery of health care services for them," said Dr Luo.

As the harsh winter approaches, WHO is concerned about the risk of increase in disease transmission and deaths. Efforts have been stepped up to not only address urgent medical needs but to also maintain preparedness for launching a rapid response to disease outbreaks when needed.

To date, WHO has airlifted 227 metric tonnes of supplies through 11 flights, with the EU Humanitarian Air Bridge flight being the latest. Further supplies are planned for delivery in the coming weeks.

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