18 January 2017 – The Ministry of Health in Somalia has provided WHO with an update on the ongoing outbreak of cholera.

In the first 2 weeks of January 2017, a total of 1306 new suspected cases of cholera and 26 deaths (case-fatality rate: 1.99%) have been reported. Between January and December 2016, a cumulative total of 15 619 suspected cases of cholera, including 531 associated deaths were reported, with a case-fatality rate of 3.4%.

Of these, 80 cases were laboratory-confirmed for *Vibrio cholerae*. The majority of the new cases reported in 2017 were from Bay, Banadir, Middle Shabelle and Lower Shabelle regions.

The overall trend of incident cases and fatality rates showed steadily increase in the last few weeks. Although the last 2 weeks period witnessed sharp increase in the total reported cases, the case-fatality rates dropped significantly from around 4% to 1.8%. Nevertheless, the case-fatality rate is still above the standard threshold of 1%. The expansion of prevention and control efforts has helped to improve the surveillance system and decrease the case-fatality rate substantially. This outbreak add greater pressure on an already weakened health system which is also battling malnutrition, measles and other emerging diseases. Somalia is currently experiencing severe drought with acute food insecurity, and water shortage. The level of the Shabelle and Juba Rivers are below average for this time of year, and many people living along the 2 rivers are finding difficult to access clean drinking-water.

Despite the rise in the number of suspected cases of cholera in south central Somalia, a multisectoral health and WASH cluster partners (comprising the Ministry of Health, WHO, UNICEF and nongovernmental organizations) is supporting response activities to the outbreak while coordination mechanisms at central and regional levels have improved. The health cluster led by WHO, have distributed acute watery diarrhoea/cholera supplies to most of the affected regions. Essential supplies such as IV fluids and oral rehydration solutions have been provided in affected communities. The cluster has also strengthened the capacity of local health workers through training on case management and infection control. The WASH cluster is supplying hygienic kits in addition of chlorination of water sources in all affected regions.

WHO has widely advocated for the use of oral cholera vaccine in Somalia's context as part of the intervention package to contain the outbreak. The vaccine has been considered and the

campaign will be conducted by February in targeting 7 hotspot areas.

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