20 March 2017 – As part of WHO’s response efforts to the severe drought in Somalia, WHO has completed delivery of over 45 tonnes of medicines and medical supplies for around 4.3 million persons, in collaboration with health authorities, to be used in health centres in the areas most hard-hit by cholera.

The medicines and supplies can address the immediate needs of population affected by the severe drought and pre-famine situation in Bay, Bakool, Gedo, Galkayo, Garowe, Banadir and Somaliland. The emergency supplies include diarrhoea kits, trauma kits for hospital use, Interagency Emergency Health Kits, intravenous solutions, and others.

An additional 26 tonnes of medicines and equipment are ready for distribution.

“We are working closely with health authorities and humanitarian partners to respond effectively to the health consequences of the ongoing drought, as well as the large cholera outbreak in different high-risk areas in Somalia,” said Dr Ghulam Popal, WHO Representative in Somalia.

Somalia is currently experiencing a largescale outbreak of cholera with over 13 000 severe cholera cases and 333 deaths reported in 11 regions since the beginning of 2017. If the current drought, food insecurity and malnutrition continue, the number of cholera cases is likely to increase.

WHO also supported the Government of Somalia in launching its first oral cholera vaccination (OCV) campaign targeting over 450 000 at-risk people aged one year and older. Vaccination of vulnerable populations in high-risk areas will reduce the number of cases and deaths as well as
limit the spread of cholera.

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