WHO EMRO | WHO mission to Al-Hudaydah discusses urgent health needs

15 November 2016 – A joint United Nations mission to Al-Hudaydah governorate was conducted to learn more about the health situation in the governorate, discuss urgent health needs and partnerships for an integrated response, including cholera outbreak interventions.

As part of the mission, WHO Deputy Representative in Yemen Dr Akjemal Magtymova visited the Port of Al-Hudaydah, Al-Thawra and Al-Olofi hospitals, as well as the Action Contre la Faim cholera treatment centre.

Dr Magtymova and representatives from OCHA and United Nations agencies discussed with national authorities ways of facilitating United Nations consignments to hospitals and health facilities, which are in urgent need of life-saving medicines and supplies.
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Dr Magtymova visits WHO warehouse in Al-Hudaydah

Dr Khalid Suhail, the Director of Al-Thawra Hospital – the main referral hospital (receives around 1500 patients every day) – acknowledged WHO support in running hospital services. In discussion with the WHO team, it was agreed that WHO would collaborate with Al-Thawra hospital to scale up emergency obstetrics, neonatal and pediatric emergency services. Dr Magtymova also visited the WHO-supported therapeutic feeding centre and discussed root causes of malnutrition, including poor breastfeeding practices and lack of knowledge on infant and young child feeding.

“It was heartbreaking to see the suffering of malnourished children and the agony of their mothers next to them. Having met and listened to the story of one-year-old Fatima, I kept thinking ‘If only Fatima’s mother had a chance to introduce additional nutritious food into the rations of Fatima early in life, her child would have been in the playground instead of lying in a malnutrition ward,” said Dr Magtymova.

On the last day of the mission, the WHO team attended a meeting at the Al-Hudayda Public Health Office to review the integrated response for cholera outbreak, including health, WASH and communication strategies. During the meeting, the need to strengthen reporting and coordination between central and governorate level was emphasized, especially the gaps in preventing new incidents of cholera through water and sanitation and health education activities.

WHO is co-lead of the Cholera Response Task Force to address the cholera outbreak in Al-Hudaydah and leading health cluster activities in the governorate.