Trained health worker visits households in different villages according to a systematic sampling from 18 districts from Sanaa and Ibb. 20 May 2016 -- Ongoing conflict, disruption of health services and food insecurity have worsened the general nutritional status of children and the population in Yemen, with more than 1 million children under the age of 5 acutely malnourished and almost 320 000 severely malnourished. Even prior to the crisis, Yemen had the second highest rates of malnourishment globally.

The need to improve the nutritional status of the population, particularly children under 5, has become increasingly desperate. However, gathering regular and updated information on the nutritional conditions of a population is one of the main challenges which impede the improvement of the nutritional status of the population.

Closely coordinating with the Ministry of Public Health and Population, WHO is working to boost the integrated nutrition surveillance system (INSS) with the aim of providing information that contributes to the analysis of causes and associated factors to take proper preventive measures and promote decisions by partners concerning priorities and the allocation of resources to meet
WHO nutrition officer in Yemen Dr Eshraq Al-Falahi trains health workers on the integrated nutrition surveillance system. Over the last weeks, WHO has organized 2 training courses on INSS targeting more than 60 nutrition specialists and health workers from Sana'a and Ibb. The training aimed to raise awareness of the importance of the information gathered by the new system and how to conduct field investigation to fill the surveillance forms, as well as how to take child nutrition-related measurements.

Following the training, the participants have visited households in different villages according to a systematic sampling from 18 districts from Sana'a and Ibb. The field visits continued for 3 days and aimed at collecting information about the nutritional status of households and the body measurements of children under the age of 5.

In addition, 2-day training of trainers has been also held by WHO to build the capacity of 25 nutrition coordinators and other health workers from Aden, Hajjah, Al Hydaydah, Al-Dhalea, Abyan and Lahj governorates.
The need to improve the nutritional status of the population, particularly children under 5, has become increasingly desperate in Yemen. WHO is working with the Ministry, UNICEF, and other health and nutrition partners to address the problem of malnutrition in Yemen, one of the main contributors to child and mother mortality during crises. Traditionally, WHO intervenes especially to strengthen nutritional surveillance and to support treatment of children with medical complications of severe acute malnutrition (SAM)," said Dr. Ahmed Shadoul, WHO Representative for Yemen.

Although nutrition surveillance is already functioning in the Ministry, the new methodology is being developed as a response to the current emergency situation that has exacerbated the nutritional state of people.

"The integrated nutrition surveillance system is a crucial instrument for the Ministry for the detection of nutrition and nutrition-related health concerns to adopt policies and trigger response, especially in the most affected areas. INSS is a potentially integrated system for all nutrition-related information to be used by stakeholders from different sectors in the Yemeni government," said Dr. Eshraq Al-Falahi, the WHO Yemen nutrition officer.

WHO plans to launch the INSS with 100 sentinel sites in 10 governorates, including Ibb, Abyan, Taiz, Hajjah, Al Hudaydah, Sa’adah, Sana’a, Aden, Lahj and Al Dhalea.