3 October 2019 – Thanks to the generous support of the Government of Kuwait, in terms of continued funding, based on a long-standing partnership—in the amount of US$ 23 million, this flexible funding is currently allowing WHO to meet the most urgent needs of the people of Yemen even as the situation evolves on a daily basis—impacting response operations frequently.

Almost 20 million people lack access to adequate healthcare, and 17.8 million people lack access to safe water and sanitation—a large contributor to the world’s largest, most explosive, cholera outbreak that has sickened over 1 million men, women and children.

Vaccine preventable diseases, poor sanitation and diseases, including cholera, measles, dengue, and diphtheria outbreaks left millions of people ill last year. Yemen’s health system is on the brink of collapse and is at-risk of famine. It is unique from other food insecure contexts due to the sheer scale of those at-risk—an estimated 20 million people, who are facing pre-famine conditions are on the verge of starvation.

“Almost five years of war has left the country in ruins and its health system extremely fragile. There are currently 32 active front lines across 10 of the 22 governorates in Yemen. In the midst of this conflict, the Yemeni people’s “right to health” hangs in the balance, said Altaf Musani, WHO Representative in Yemen.

Kuwait—by Yemen’s side

The Government of Kuwait has supported multiple UN agencies, including the WHO—going above and beyond the remit of support to just humanitarian response operations. Over the years, even prior to the conflict, Kuwait has been by the side of the Yemeni people—building
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hospitals, universities and secondary schools in the country.

“The Kuwaiti people and government are committed to continuing their longstanding support to the Yemeni people. Kuwait is working along both political and humanitarian paths to resolve the Yemeni crisis”. Said Ambassador Jamal Al Gunaim, The Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva.

The friendship and partnership between Kuwait and Yemen is several years old, and the support of the Government of Kuwait has been meeting the needs of the people of Yemen for decades.

“WHO’s partnership with the Government of Kuwait has been life-saving, due to the flexibility of these funds. Funding flexibility allows our response to be more targeted and agile—as we concentrate on areas and communities that are most vulnerable,” said Altaf Musani, WHO Representative in Yemen.

WHO continues to scale up health activities and with the support of Kuwait, conducted multiple rounds of vector control campaigns to fight dengue, supported 60 medical teams, including 10 emergency medical mobile teams and 21 surgical teams stationed near active frontlines, provided anti-cancer drugs to 12 oncology centers, and provided 21 dialysis centres with renal sessions across Yemen.

This and other donor contributions are the only lifeline for the people of Yemen. Without it, WHO would have to shut down operations, which means millions will be without food, shelter, water, and access to health care. The time to act is now—and we have already run out of time.

Note to editors

The 2019 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP) requires US$4.2 billion to assist more than 20 million Yemenis including 10 million people who rely entirely on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs every month. As of today, the YHRP is 56% funded, we need to close this gap. At the High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen convened by the UN Secretary-General in February 2019, the United Nations and humanitarian partners were promised USD$ 2.6 billion to meet the urgent needs. Humanitarian agencies are
appealing to donors to provide funds as quickly as possible.

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