

3 October 2019 – As Yemen approaches more than 4 years of war, an estimated 20 million people are in need of access to healthcare. Through the generous support of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), WHO has been able to meet health needs in the midst of this evolving conflict.

Strategic partnerships save lives

“In Yemen, the operative word is “survival” -- not only are we meeting the immediate and urgent health needs of the people, we are also protecting the health system from collapse—and we cannot do it alone. Thanks to OFDA and other partners—we don't have to.” said Altaf Musani, WHO Representative in Yemen.

Support from OFDA, one of the largest donors to the health and nutrition response in Yemen has enabled WHO to meet nutrition needs and increase health care access through the health service delivery mechanism known as the Minimum Service Package (MSP). The combined lines of efforts in these two major response areas aims to reach millions.

Yemen is a population on the brink of starvation, and an estimated 20 million Yemenis are food insecure—the most vulnerable of these are children. Through critical funding from OFDA in the amount of US\$ 27 million, WHO will be able to sustain 60 feeding centres—increasing lives saved in the upwards of an estimated 15,000 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) with medical complications.

These children are the sickest of the sick, and since the country is on the brink of famine, there are plans to add 30 more feeding centers to reach more children, with OFDA paving the way forward.

Overcoming challenges, strengthening nutrition response capacity

This the world's most challenging operational environment. Mounting a sustained and effective response to critical health needs is next to impossible when done alone, but thanks to OFDA and its partnership with the WHO, national NGOs and international NGOs have been pulled in and expanded. And, the consolidation of their efforts has saved children from malnutrition and worse yet—death.

“Yemen is an “all-risk” environment. Day in and day out we face challenges no other mission faces. This is still the world’s largest humanitarian crisis that is politically complex and operationally challenging. Yemen cannot wait and we will not allow innocent Yemenis to die unnecessarily, said Altaf Musani, WHO Representative in Yemen.

This has been a long and valued partnership, for which WHO is grateful. This funding will allow WHO to deliver health services and increase access to it, scale up cholera preparedness efforts in close coordination with the Health Cluster partners.

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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