



## PRESS RELEASE – Field hospital installed by World Health Organization (WHO) in Dolow Somalia district, along the Somali-Ethiopian border

### *WHO opens much needed field hospital for emergency medical care at the Somali-Ethiopian border*

**27 September, 2011 | Nairobi** – A new field hospital was installed last week in Dolow Somalia, nearby the Ethiopian border to provide medical aid to thousands of Somali refugees fleeing towards the border areas. The hospital will be operated and managed by WHO. The world health body is providing medical professionals to staff the facility as well as all the needed medical supplies and equipment.



Together with the installation of the field hospital also needed medical supplies and equipment got delivered.

The main reason for setting up a field hospital is part of WHO's strategy to decentralize health care, especially in an emergency setting. Many internally displaced people are seeking health assistance and therefore flee to bigger cities, including Mogadishu. In order to stop some of the huge influx of IDPs to the Somali capital, the newly installed field hospital will treat patients mainly from the Gedo and Bakool regions. However, also people from the Ethiopian and Kenyan border areas might benefit from this newly established hospital.

“In an emergency situation like Somalia, a field hospital may be the only way to improve the availability of health care services for communities when existing hospitals are not sufficient, says Dr Marthe Everard, WHO's representative for Somalia. “A field hospital is an enormous relief for the population by bringing health services to them while lessening the burden on existing overstretched health facilities,” she continued. The Dolow Somalia area previously never had secondary health care, therefore the best way to reach the people in need and make best use of the resources is by setting up a field hospital.

“Last week, more than 400 patients were treated – an average of 75 patients per day - and more than 30 surgical operations were performed successfully by a WHO medical team” added Dr Omar Saleh, emergency surgical tutor for WHO Somalia. “We even diagnosed and treated a case that came all the way from Gaalkacyo, with a neck swelling looking for medical assistance” Dr Saleh continued.



The newly installed field hospital in Dolow, Somalia

The major consultations included malaria, acute watery diarrhea, acute respiratory infections and provision of emergency surgical treatments for patients suffering from tumors, shrapnel, foreign bodies and birth defects.

The installed field hospital is a mobile self-contained and self-sufficient facility, which includes a tent with 8 beds, one operating theatre, and a basic laboratory. The field hospital is meant to run for the coming months. Financial support has been provided by the Norwegian government.

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*B-Roll material and photographs are available upon request*