



OFFICE OF THE REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE SUDAN

## **An Outbreak of Meningococcal Meningitis Reported 19 March 2006**

A national task force under the chairmanship of the Federal Ministry of Health together with WHO, UNICEF and NGOs has been established after reports of outbreaks of meningococcal meningitis in the country.

As of 16 March, 526 cases with 23 deaths (case fatality rate of 4.37%) have been reported across the country. The epidemic thresholds in four States (Blue Nile, Gedaref, Kassala and South Kordofan) have so far been crossed. A laboratory investigation of *Cerebro Spinal Fluid* (CSF) samples conducted at NAMRU-3, a WHO collaborating centre in Cairo, have isolated the *Neisseria meningitidis sero group-A* as the causative strain for the outbreak of meningococcal meningitis. Mass vaccination campaigns with bivalent vaccines (A/C) are continuing in South Kordofan as well as in Gedaref State. Two vaccination campaigns have been completed in the Blue Nile and in Kassala States.

Another outbreak of meningococcal meningitis disease caused by *Neisseria meningitidis sero group-W135* has been confirmed (by laboratory culture) in the Hamadyia IDP camp in Zalingei in West Darfur and as of 10 March, 28 cases of meningococcal meningitis disease and one death (case fatality rate of 3.57%) have been reported to WHO through the Early Warning and Alert Response Surveillance (EWARS) system of Darfur.

The national task force is coordinating the public health response to the outbreak and WHO requested trivalent vaccines (ACW) from the Internal Coordination Group (ICG) for the outbreak in Darfur. The request was approved and the vaccines have arrived in Khartoum. The vaccination campaign is expected to start later this week.

WHO Sudan is providing technical guidance for outbreak control and case management of the disease in addition to drugs and other emergency supplies for outbreak investigation.