



A child is screened for malnutrition using a mid-upper arm circumference tape at a nutrition stabilization centre in Abu Shouk IDP camp in North Darfur (photo from 2022)

16 August 2023 – Consecutive years of dry spells, high commodity prices, conflict and displacement have led to a food insecurity crisis in Sudan. The situation has worsened with the conflict that has gripped the country since April 2023 with severe food insecurity propelled by shortage of cash, escalating food prices, unprecedented mass displacement, limited access to water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as disease outbreaks in the face of lack of access to health care. Overall, more than 20 million people across Sudan are facing high levels of acute food insecurity. It is estimated that 4 million women and children are currently acutely malnourished and more than 100 000 children under 5 need around the clock specialized inpatient care at stabilization centres for severe acute malnutrition with complication.

Despite constraints related to access, insecurity and operational hurdles due to the ongoing conflict, the World Health Organization (WHO) is supporting the functionality and scale up of

stabilization centres across Sudan to treat and restore to health infants and young children with severe acute malnutrition with medical complications. Since the start of the conflict, WHO has distributed 517 paediatric kits (also known as modules) for the management of severe acute malnutrition to stabilization centres and health partners to meet urgent needs of 91 stabilization centres in 10 accessible states. The kits, which contain oral and injectable medicines, malaria medicines, medical equipment and renewable supplies, will help save the lives of about 26 000 severely malnourished children through timely treatment of their life-threatening conditions. Additional supplies have been prepositioned in El Obeid and White Nile states awaiting shipment to West Kordofan, South Kordofan and Darfur states.

“Responding to the malnutrition crisis calls for a chain of responses. WHO teams support stabilization centres with medical supplies, training and oversight; our health and nutrition partners provide lifesaving special milk and food. Together, we are working to save lives and ensure the health and well-being of vulnerable Sudanese children,” said Dr Abdul Baseer Qureshi, WHO Technical Officer in charge of the nutrition programme.

WHO teams also trained 156 health care workers in the diagnosis and management of severe acute malnutrition with medical complications to build the operational capacity of stabilization centres, and continue to provide supportive supervision and expert advice the stabilization centre staff.

The distribution of these lifesaving medicines and medical supplies to support nutrition programmes was made possible with the financial support of Italian Cooperation, Sudan Humanitarian Fund and USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance.

Prior to the current crisis, WHO had been supporting the response to the food insecurity crisis in Sudan and the greater horn of Africa through the establishment and capacity-building of stabilization centres for management of severe acute malnutrition, supporting routine immunization and vaccination campaigns protect the population from disease outbreaks that can have devastating impacts on the health of malnourished children.

WHO remains committed to protecting the health of the people of Sudan and will continue support the Sudanese health authorities in the response to malnutrition and disease outbreaks.

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