



Photo credit: WHO/Ismaïl Taxta

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS



535 789

(90% of the target) people aged \geq 1 year vaccinated against cholera



1 576 206

doses of childhood vaccines administered across Somalia



1 825 661

people reached with preventive messages by 1194 community health workers



3 368 466

people accessed outpatient consultations across 281 health facilities



202

health facilities now reporting through the integrated disease surveillance and response system



3.24

million children aged $<$ 5 years given novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2)

Foreword

Renewing hopes for health



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While the drought conditions continued to improve in the first quarter of 2023, we remain concerned about the effect of El Niño on health in the country. It is generally anticipated that moderate-to-heavy floods are likely to occur in parts of Somalia along the riverbanks of Juba and Hirshabelle in October 2023, a situation

that raises serious concerns. The climate forecast also indicates that this El Niño might be the worst in its history. A public health risk analysis by WHO shows that prevalent infectious diseases will see an upsurge while new diseases that have not been seen before will emerge. Outbreaks of zoonotic infections such as Rift Valley fever are also feared.

Moving from one emergency to another – whether humanitarian, pandemic or climate crises – to prevent deaths and save lives in the face of severe challenges has been the norm of our work in Somalia. WHO's front-line workers, having a strong presence throughout the country, continue to work with all other partners and agencies and the ministries of health to ensure that the health of the people, especially those who are vulnerable, excluded and marginalized, is not compromised.

WHO is working to develop and operationalize a flood preparedness plan in view of the El Niño threat in close coordination with the Government and other partners. It will be yet another considerable undertaking for us, following our scaled-up response operations in the country since 2020, first against COVID-19 and then against the drought. Nonetheless, despite all these challenges, WHO remains committed to doing whatever it takes to save and improve the lives of all vulnerable people in Somalia.

Dr Mamunur Rahman Malik
WHO Representative in Somalia

Strategic priority 1 – Advance universal health coverage by accelerating the primary health care-led recovery with a view to supporting the goals of integrated health services



1.5 million children across Somalia vaccinated through scaled-up routine immunization

The WHO country office has helped the federal and state ministries of health to administer 1 576 206 doses of different childhood vaccines to children younger than 1 year, including measles containing vaccines (MCV1 and 2), pentavalent vaccines (1 to 3) and inactivated polio vaccine (IPV 1 and 2) during May-August 2023. An urban immunization campaign was also conducted in 17 districts of Banadir in May-August to administer 289 792 doses of routine immunization among children younger than 1 year. In addition, health facilities and WHO-supported outreach teams vaccinated 38 137 pregnant women with tetanus-diphtheria toxoid (Td2) vaccines across the country.

Scaled-up screening for leprosy continues

An outreach screening activity to detect leprosy cases and treat them before they develop a grade 2 disability was conducted in May-August, with the assistance of WHO. The outreach teams screened 2200 people in seven regions (Banadir, Middle and Lower Juba, Bay, Hiran, and Middle and Lower Shabelle). In all, 327 cases of leprosy were detected during these activities with Middle Shabelle recording the highest number of cases (78 cases) and Banadir the lowest (three cases). Of the detected cases, 125 (38.2%) had multibacillary leprosy and 202 (61.8%) had paucibacillary leprosy.

Neglected Tropical Diseases Strategic Plan 2023-2027 is developed for Somalia

WHO Somalia provided technical support to the Federal Ministry of Health to develop a Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) Strategic Plan to help Somalia with the implementation of integrated, people-centred, disease-specific and cross-cutting interventions including rehabilitation. The strategy will be rolled out after formal approval by the ministry. The strategy will help strengthen Somali health care by implementing integrated and cross-cutting activities and building the capacity of public and private health care workers to enhance active case detection and diagnosis, community-based treatment (including mass drug administration and individual case management), surveillance, reporting and data management, rehabilitation, and vector-control measures.

Strengthened efforts continue in response to rising tuberculosis cases

Tuberculosis is still a major public health concern in Somalia. Although the incidence of the disease is decreasing, the tuberculosis programme, run by the Ministry of Health with the support of the WHO country office, is consistently recording an increase in the number of tuberculosis cases. Tuberculosis incidence decreased from 286 per 100 000

population in 2010 to 250 per 100 000 population in 2022. However, 9113 cases of tuberculosis notified from 1 January 2023 to 30 June, 9102 (99.9%) were new cases, while 11 (0.1%) were previously treated cases. Additionally, of the total cases, 7978 (87.5%) were tested for HIV infection, of whom 50 (0.6%) were HIV-positive and 43 (86.0%) were put on antiretroviral treatment. In addition, the WHO country office supported the federal and state ministries of health to distribute 3 457 772 tablets and capsules of first-line tuberculosis drugs to all tuberculosis treatment centres and 49 132 second-line drugs to the three centres in the country that provide treatment for multidrug-resistant tuberculosis.

First neonatal care assessment is conducted in Puntland

Somalia has the second highest neonatal mortality rate in the world – 39 out of every 1000 newborns die shortly after birth. More than 80% of all newborn deaths and stillbirths result from three preventable and treatable conditions, namely complication due to prematurity, intrapartum-related deaths (including birth asphyxia) and neonatal infections. In Puntland State, more than 91% of newborns do not receive postnatal care. On the request of the Puntland Ministry of Health, the WHO country office, in collaboration with UNICEF and UNFPA, conducted the first joint neonatal care assessment in Puntland (10–20 May 2023) with the aim of recording, evaluating and helping to improve newborn health related to the above-mentioned preventable causes. The assessment used WHO’s standard survey instruments to collect data by visiting 14 public and two private health facilities. The data collected are being evaluated and the results will be shared with the State Ministry of Health in the next quarter with the view to developing an operational plan accordingly.

Somalia commemorates World Breastfeeding Week

The Federal Ministry of Health in collaboration with the WHO country office and partners commemorated World Breastfeeding Week (1–7 August) to highlight

the importance of breastfeeding for both mothers and children. This year’s theme, “Let’s make breastfeeding and work, work”, focused on workplace barriers that prevent women from breastfeeding or cause them to stop breastfeeding earlier than recommended. The Federal Ministry of Health and WHO country office have urged all partners to work together to establish breastfeeding-friendly environments in all health care facilities and workplaces across the country to promote and enhance exclusive breastfeeding rates among Somali women.

Roadmap for “the big catch-up” is developed

The WHO country office supported the Federal Ministry of Health and partners to celebrate World Immunization Week (24–30 April) under the global theme of “the big catch-up”. This effort resolves to strengthen primary health care and routine immunization across the country and ensure that no one is left behind. Routine immunization coverage in Somalia is low compared with other countries and has been further affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some progress was made during 2022 to scale up its efforts to strengthen routine immunization, but still more than half a million children in Somalia are estimated not to be covered by routine immunization services for a number of reasons including severe drought and widespread displacements. As part of the big catch-up, WHO, in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Health and partners, is developing an immunization recovery plan to reach all those who have missed out on their routine immunization in the past 3 years, including all women of childbearing age and adults.



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Strategic priority 2 – Enhance health security by promoting emergency preparedness, surveillance and response using an all-hazard and one-health approach



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WHO scales up response as worsening drought continues

Somalia continues to face a serious climate crisis due to failed rainy seasons for a fifth consecutive season. This has resulted in prolonged drought that has affected 8.3 million people including 1.8 million children facing severe acute malnutrition and 739 800 newly displaced people. During May-August, the WHO country office continued to implement integrated health response activities to reach 4 715 572 drought-affected people – about 60% of the targeted 7.6 million. Special effort was made to reach the communities with scaled-up health and nutrition interventions by deploying 1194 community health workers (CHWs) and 160 community outreach teams

to provide outpatient consultations to 3 368 466 people in drought-affected districts. Additionally, the country office delivered 598 metric tons of supplies for drought response activities, including 137 boxes of oral rehydration salts, 98 types of cholera kits (drugs, equipment and other supplies), 326 different types of emergency health kits, 74 severe acute malnutrition kits and laboratory supplies. The integrated response helped develop an operational coordination mechanism with partners from the health and WASH clusters with 53 implementing partners (two United Nations (UN), 21 international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) and 30 national NGOs) working in 17 of the 19 regions in the country and 61 of the 74 drought-affected districts. WHO Somalia provided support by coordinating with 55 health sector partners (four UN agencies, 30 NGOs and 21 INGOs) to scale up efforts to detect, prepare for and respond to disease outbreaks. The 1194 CHWs deployed in the drought-affected districts helped administer oral rehydration solution and zinc to 11 390 children and referred 4436 children younger than 5 years with respiratory infections to stabilization centres. Timely and proactive interventions by WHO have brought the death rate from 2% of children admitted to stabilization centres to 1%. To sustain these interventions, WHO also supported on-the-job training for 36 health care workers (including 15 female health workers) on inpatient management of severe acute malnutrition with medical complications at these stabilization centres.

Stabilization centres record 33% new admissions of severely malnourished children

Given the epidemiological situation, acute watery diarrhoea/cholera cases increased in May 2023 (5591 cholera and 43 435 acute watery diarrhoea cases compared with 3441 cholera and 23 456 acute watery diarrhoea cases during the corresponding months in 2022). Therefore, WHO supported the federal and state ministries of health to set up 40 oral rehydration points at local health facilities, and to manage and maintain 14 cholera treatment centres and 48 stabilization centres

across the drought-affected districts. During May–August 2023, 12 058 children younger than 5 years were admitted to stabilization centres compared with 8123 admissions between January and March 2023, representing about a 33% increase. By the end of August 2023, 10 946 (91%) of the children admitted had been discharged from the stabilization centres.

Cholera campaign in Mander triangle helps vaccinate 90% of targeted population

WHO supported the Federal Ministry of Health and the Jubaland State Ministry of Health to conduct a single-dose reactive cholera vaccination campaign in five drought-affected districts in Jubaland that bordered Kenya and Ethiopia (the so-called Mander triangle) from 12 to 16 August 2023. The campaign helped to vaccinate 535 789 people aged 1 year and older (90% of the targeted population), including 275 444 women and 158 507 children younger than 5 years. The vaccination campaign was synchronized among border communities with Ethiopia and Kenya. The country office deployed 788 vaccination teams, each composed of two vaccinators, a data clerk, a social mobilizer and a cold chain attendant, for this 5-day house-to-house campaign. Gavi – the Vaccine Alliance, provided the vaccines and funds to implement this life-saving intervention.

COVID-19 vaccination coverage reaches 48%

By the end of August 2023, the WHO country office had supported the federal and state ministries of health to administer 11 185 835 doses of COVID-19 vaccine since March 2021. Now, 48% (8 153 896 people) of the population have been fully vaccinated, 17% (2 897 815) partially vaccinated and 0.8% (134 124) have had at least one booster dose. As of 31 August 2023, 30% of the internally displaced population, 5% of the nomadic populations, and 47% of urban and 18% of rural populations had been vaccinated across the country. Out of the total number of people vaccinated, 46% are female. The country is recorded to have

used 65.8 doses per 100 population. During May–August, COVID-19 vaccination activities were carried out specifically in Puntland, Somaliland and Banadir where 1 932 812 vaccine doses were administered – 1 214 246 doses were used for fully vaccination, 450 318 for partial vaccination and 268 248 for booster doses.

Community-based services continue within the fragile health system

During May–August, WHO deployed 1194 CHWs across 62 districts, including five newly liberated districts in Hirshabelle State, to provide integrated health services and risk communication, community education, alert detection and reporting, screening for malnutrition in children, home-based management for COVID-19 and common childhood illnesses, and immunization. The CHWs reached 1 825 661 people and detected and reported 10 214 COVID-19 alerts to district-based rapid response teams, with 13% of the alerts being confirmed by rapid response teams.

In drought-affected districts, CHWs screened 196 748 children younger than 5 years for malnutrition and referred 24 621 of them to stabilization centres and 35 245 to outpatient therapeutic programme for additional treatment. They also identified 10 276 children younger than 5 years with acute diarrhoea and treated 6661 with oral rehydration salts and zinc. In addition, 15 131 children younger than 5 years received deworming tablets and 48 500 children aged 6 months and older received vitamin A supplements from the CHWs.



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Oxygen therapy helps save lives in Somalia

Respiratory infections are still one of the main causes of death in children younger than 5 years in Somalia. To address this problem, the WHO country office supported the Federal Ministry of Health to use the WHO-supported network of CHWs to measure the oxygen saturation level of children during their routine outreach sessions. During May–August, CHWs screened 7299 children younger than 5 years using pulse oximeters and referred 1359 to the nearest health facility for oxygen therapy. In addition, the CHWs administered iron and folic acid supplements to 15 808 pregnant women and sensitized 141 119 lactating mothers on infant and young child feeding practices.

More health facilities are reporting through the Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response system

WHO helped a pool of 52 master trainers to conduct a series of seven training sessions on integrated disease surveillance and response (IDSR) in Banadir, Jubaland and Hirshabelle states during May–August. These training courses trained 325 health workers (including 123 female health workers) from 145 health facility and district management teams to submit reports through the IDSR system. Now, 202 health facilities are submitting reports to the IDSR system on a weekly basis.

Polio campaigns conducted using novel oral polio vaccine

WHO Somalia supported the federal and state ministries of health to undertake four rounds of a targeted polio vaccine campaign in 80 districts in south and central states (South West, Hirshabelle, Galmudug, Jubaland, Banadir Regional Administration/Mogadishu) and Somaliland. These campaigns helped to vaccinate 3.24 million children younger than 5 years (except in South West State

where 71 080 children up to 10 years were vaccinated) with the novel oral polio vaccine. The 5-day campaigns recorded an overall administrative coverage of more than 96% and used about 5.78 million doses of vaccine (including repeated vaccination in different campaign rounds). WHO also introduced the direct disbursement mechanism to provide incentive payments to front-line health workers working in accessible districts during these polio campaigns.

WHO trains health workers on polio surveillance and vaccination safety protocols

In view of the circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) transmission in Somaliland, WHO supported the Ministry of Health in Somaliland to use the generally stable novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2) vaccine to reduce the cVDPV2 disease burden. To prepare the front-line health care workers before the introduction of nOPV2, WHO arranged a 3-day training course for 47 health workers (including nine female health workers) to understand and follow the nOPV-2 safety management protocols and vaccine-preventable disease surveillance. Vaccine-preventable disease surveillance will help monitor the effect of vaccination on disease incidence, identify high-risk areas and outbreaks, and guide response activities, including immunization.



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New cohorts of the Field Epidemiology Training Program complete their training

The National Institute of Health in Mogadishu awarded completion certificates to 26 resident trainees (30% female participants) under the Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP) in August 2023. Since the start of the front-line FETP in August 2021, 95 students including (30 female students) have graduated to support implementation of health services at national and state levels. The residents are health care workers recruited by the federal and state ministries of health who undertake 6-months resident training at the National Institute of Health.



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Strategic priority 3 – Promote healthier populations and well-being using multisectoral approaches to address the social determinants of health and risk factors

Scale up of response activities is needed for the coming El Niño

Amid an ongoing and escalating drought across Somalia which has already affected 7.8 million people and displaced 1.3 million forcing them to live in camps for displaced persons, heavy rains in recent months have caused flash

floods that displaced an additional 400 000 people in Jubaland state, destroying their livelihoods. Limited access to safe water and proper sanitation in displaced communities as result of the drought and floods led to a cholera outbreak in Jubaland. As of the end of July 2023, 11 704 cases and suspected cases of cholera, with 30 associated deaths, had been reported in 28 drought-affected districts, 54% of whom were children younger than 5 years with 52% being girls. After the cholera outbreak in drought- and flood-affected districts, WHO deployed 1194 CHWs and 788 outreach teams who reached 1.79 million people with messages on cholera prevention and WASH and nutrition, and provided outpatient consultation services, childhood vaccination, and acute diarrhoea and cholera treatment. Despite scaling up the cholera response activities in drought-affected districts, especially Jubaland, the risk of cholera is still high.

In Somalia, the El Niño phenomenon is anticipated to result in more rainfall, posing an increased risk of flooding, particularly in river regions. There is now a greater than 90% chance that El Niño will continue to the end of the year, with a peak in October. Using the Somalia Water and Land Information Management system, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations anticipates major flood events. Flooding of this magnitude could result in loss of life, widespread displacement, property destruction and livelihood disruption. Without effective preparedness and mitigation measures, it could exacerbate acute food insecurity and lead to a rise in excess death. Therefore, an immediate scale up of response activities for cholera in high-risk districts is needed.

New initiative aims to integrate gender-based violence and violence against children in health programmes

WHO, with support from the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office, initiated the process of integrating gender-based violence and violence against children in health programmes and providing capacity-building for health care providers and focal points in these important areas. A consultant from the Regional Office provided the technical assistance and facilitated a refresher training of trainers for a cohort of the existing certified trainers on

clinical management of rape. The consultant also advised that components on gender-based violence be included in the reproductive maternal neonatal child adolescent health strategy that is under review.

WHO conducts training on the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment across Somalia

WHO conducted six training courses on prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment targeting front-line health workers, regional- and district-based polio officers, and partners working under the WHO-led health cluster in the country. A total of 196 personnel were trained, 52 of whom were women. The country office has also used the health cluster platform for advocacy and information-sharing on prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment with health partners through a standing agenda in all monthly cluster meetings.

WHO continues to train health care workers on infection prevention and control protocols

The WHO country office supported the Somaliland and Galmudug health ministries to train 105 health professionals on infection prevention control measures. In Somaliland, 80 health workers (including 45 women) were trained while in Galmudug, 25 were trained (including 14 women).

Water quality surveillance is strengthened in Jubaland

The WHO country office supported the Federal Ministry of Health and Ministry of Water to conduct water quality surveillance in the drought- and flood-affected areas of Jubaland (Kismayo, Dolow, Belethawa and Luq) in July 2023. Of 12 samples collected, 10 (83%) were contaminated, while three samples collected from Kismayo were also contaminated with coliform. The WASH cluster partners initiated the treatment process of these water sources.

Strategic priority 4 – Strengthen health governance using the Global Action Plan for Health and Well-being to support joint and collective actions to achieve health-related SDG goals



Photo credit: WHO/Fouzia Bano

WHO joins global dialogue for health and peace

WHO Somalia joined the 2023 edition of the Stockholm Forum on peace and development held in May. The topic under consideration was “Strengthening a resilient health system for countries affected by war, conflict and fragility”. The WHO country office presented the experiences from Somalia. This prompted dialogue on the role of health and equitable health care in peacebuilding and on the tireless work required to build health system resilience amidst repeated crises and emergencies. Beyond the discussions, the networking and knowledge outcomes of the Forum helped inform the actions for WHO work in Somalia.

Somalia launches first National Health Professional Council with support of WHO

At the request of the Federal Ministry of Health, the WHO country office provided technical support to launch the first National Health Professional Council (NHPC). The council was established by law NHPC Act LR.31/2020.

The launching ceremony on 2 May 2023 marked an achievement in the process of building regulatory systems for health professionals, health facilities and health training institutions in Somalia. It also marked a starting point for the NHPC to establish rules, procedures and standards for accreditation and licensing. The urgent need for a regulatory system is acknowledged by all the partners and WHO will continue to advise and support the NHPC.

Roundtable on improved health governance is held in Mogadishu

The Federal Ministry of Health, with support from the WHO country office, convened a health sector coordination roundtable in July to initiate an accountable and efficient coordination and collaboration mechanism among the donors, implementing partners and the ministries of health at the federal and state levels. This event was a turning point in health sector coordination and governance. Building upon the deliberations from the alignment workshop held in May 2023, this roundtable helped review the emerging aid structure and the start of the biggest health programmes in the country. The meeting was attended by subnational and national stakeholders, partners and donors. The participants agreed to help the government develop a mutually agreed accountability framework to ensure transparency and efficiency and cut down duplications of efforts. The participants agreed that these steps were particularly important to ensure optimal implementation of the Damal Caafimaad project (World Bank funded project started in August 2023) and the Better Lives for Somali Women and Children project (funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office), which is expected to start before the end of the year.

Expanding the provision of mental health care continues

The WHO country office continued to build capacities of health professionals to provide mental health care and

psychosocial support using the WHO-recommended Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP). In June and July, WHO supported the state ministries of health to conduct training for 50 professionals (including 15 women) working in regional hospitals of Hudur (South West State) and Dhusamareb (Galmudug State) and helped the ministries to develop a corresponding referral system.

Somalia is represented in side-events at the 75th World Health Assembly

WHO supported Somalia's representation in multiple side events at the World Health Assembly in May, which included organizing a side event in partnership with WHO Afghanistan and the Brussels office on partnerships for health. This event brought together ministers of health from three countries (Chile, Jamaica and Somalia), three WHO Regional Directors (from the Eastern Mediterranean, European and Americas regions) and the Director-General of the Public Health Agency of Sweden.

Additionally, the WHO Representative for Somalia, Dr Sk Md Mamunur Rahman Malik, and the Federal Minister of Health of Somalia, His Excellency Dr Ali Haji Aden, spoke at a high-level side event on health for peace, pandemic preparedness and immunization, which was hosted by WHO's Director General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.



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WHO Somalia convenes roundtables with donors to develop a coordinated way forward

Dr Richard Brennan, WHO Regional Emergency Director of Health Emergencies, Dr Ali Ardalan, WHO Regional Adviser and Head of Health Systems in Emergencies along with the senior officials from the Federal Ministry of Health met with UN agencies, donors and representatives of civil society organizations in August 2023. This roundtable meeting helped to renew consensus on the basic principles of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and develop recommendations for the way forward.

In July 2023, WHO Somalia was invited by Rising Nomads (a local United States-based NGO supporting Somali youth) to Minneapolis to participate in Somali Week, where there were opportunities to connect with the large Somali diaspora. A roundtable with state representatives, including Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, helped facilitate a new opportunity to engage with the Somali diaspora in the United States and seek their support to improve health security in Somalia.

Mr Altaf Musani, WHO Director, Health Emergency Interventions, participated in a roundtable meeting with Somalia humanitarian and development donors on the importance of health system resilience to mitigate health risks during droughts and other public health emergencies in Somalia in May 2023.



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Federal Republic of Somalia
Local Government and Benadir Region
Directorate of Health and Human Service



World Health Organization
Somalia

Climate Resilient Health System Solarization of Hamarweyne Health Center

Supported by
World Health Organization

Handed over to

Mayor of Mogadishu and Governor of Benadir Regional Administration

| 9 May 2023 |

In presence of

Dr. Ali Haji Adam A... Minister of Health and Human Services, Federal Republic of Somalia
Said Mohamed... Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Federal Republic of Somalia
Abdusssein Jir... (Madaale), Mayor of Mogadishu and Governor of Benadir Regional Administration



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