

Participants:

ECHO, IOM, MSF, OCHA, Oxfam, Solidarités International, UNICEF, WHO, WFP.

1. Joint-Briefing on the Cholera Situation in the Lake Chad Basin and neighboring countries (UNICEF and WHO)

Following introductions, UNICEF gave a brief presentation on the WCA regional cholera platform. Information about the platform can be found online at <http://www.platformecholera.info/>.

UNICEF continued to brief the group about the current cholera outbreak in the Lake Chad Basin. More than 30,000 cases and 601 deaths had been reported since the beginning of the year - 16 times more than in previous years. However, it was emphasized that the numbers of cases and fatalities reported are usually seriously underestimated, *inter alia* for political reasons.

There is serious concern that the outbreak will further spread along the rivers and due to floods and heavy rains to areas in Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali – countries in which real progress had been made in the past towards eliminating cholera. There is also the risk that migrations routes could further spread cholera to other countries of the Sahel.

The presentation, including key figures and scenarios can be found in the [meeting folder](#).

2. Response of humanitarian partners (All partners)

It was highlighted that emergency response is underway involving different sectors, including health, communication and WASH. Participants briefed about some of their activities:

Last week, WHO has increased its alert level from 1 to 2 for cholera in Niger (as previously in Nigeria) on a scale to 4, implying that country offices were no longer able to provide an adequate response and global support needed to be activated. WHO is in contact with Government officials of the affected countries to strengthen surveillance and prevention efforts and to facilitate a cross-border response. WHO had made another request for cholera vaccines for Niger to the International Coordination Group (ICG), which manages the global stockpile of oral cholera vaccine. Furthermore, WHO is requesting financial support through its Contingency Fund for Emergencies and is sending additional experts to Niger. However, in light of the current cholera outbreak in Zimbabwe, as well as the cholera and Ebola outbreak in the DRC, WHO's human resources are significantly strained.

Solidarités International is implementing WASH and health response activities throughout the region. ECHO had contributed to the IFRC DREF for the cholera response in Maradi, Niger. The response is being implemented in coordination with MSF and focuses on WASH and health. MSF had undertaken a vaccination campaign in Northeastern Nigeria in February and WHO had vaccinated the population in Borno at the end of 2017. MSF is scaling up response activities in Maiduguri. It was pointed out that many humanitarian actors were already operational in Northeastern Nigeria and could access funding through ongoing projects. However, access constrains severely curtailed the partners' operationality.

However, in order to control the outbreak, UNICEF stressed that a cross-border, multi-sectorial emergency response, involving stronger involvement of financial and technical partners was needed. Insufficient financial and

human resources were cited among the main challenges for partners to scale up the response. With regards to funds, it was pointed out that it should be explored how resources could be mobilized in connection with the substantial financial commitments made at the recent High Level Conference on the Lake Chad region in Berlin. However, it was also pointed out that more funds would not address all the challenges, such as a shortage of operational implementing partners in certain areas, access constraints and complexities with regards to cross-border operations.

The group agreed on the severity of the situation and on the imperative to scale up the response without delay to decrease the risk of a proliferation to other countries and to reverse progress made in the region. In order to do so, the group agreed that more advocacy and information sharing was needed. Considering the regional implications of the outbreak, the importance of advocacy at the regional level, involving headquarters, and implicating financial partners, was emphasized. **The group recommended that OCHA, UNICEF and WHO would work on key messages reflecting the gravity of the situation, and including information on response activities, best practices and risk scenarios.** Additionally, the importance of prevention and contingency efforts, especially in Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali, would also need to be included in the messages.

3. AOB

It was noted that the National Emergency Management Agency of Nigeria, on 17 September, had declared a national disaster in Anambra, Delta, Kogi and Niger states following heavy flooding that have claimed 100 lives, submerged farms and marooned thousands of people in their homes. The Government has released 10 million USD for relief assistance. UN aid agencies are coordinating with the authorities to provide additional support. Heavy rains are predicted to continue and further raise water levels. It was underlined that this flooding could further exacerbate the cholera outbreak.