



Regional Update No. 5: Novel Influenza A/H1N1 Global Outbreak Date: 6 July 2009

HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ There are 33 cases of Influenza A (H1N1) as of 6 July 2009.
- ✓ Due to health challenges facing the region, WHO urges countries in the region to strengthen surveillance and treatment to limit spread of the disease.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

There are 33 confirmed cases of the Influenza A (H1N1) in Mauritius, Seychelles and South Africa. Botswana has one suspected case.

Countries in the region are revising their Contingency and Business Continuity Plans. The World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Director for Africa, Dr Luis Gomes Sambo has urged countries in the region to be extra vigilant and strengthen their disease surveillance to ensure prompt detection and response to the Pandemic H1N1 2009.

Table 1: no. of countries in Southern Africa reporting H1N1

Country	Confirmed cases	Suspected Cases
Botswana		1
Mauritius	1	
Seychelles	1	
South Africa	31	
Total	33	1

Given the prevailing health challenges facing the region, it is vital that every effort is made to strengthen surveillance and treatment to limit spread of the disease. All the cases reported thus far in southern Africa have been promptly detected and confirmed by the surveillance system and laboratory facilities available locally or regionally. Community sensitization and mobilization should be intensified.

As of 6 July 2009, other countries in the Africa region reporting confirmed cases of Influenza A (H1N1) according to WHO, include Cape Verde (3 cases), Algeria (5 cases), Egypt (78 cases); Ethiopia (3 cases) and Cote d'Ivoire (2 cases), Kenya (15 cases). All the confirmed cases are imported with the exception of one case in Algeria where the patient was in close contact with an imported case that was confirmed locally.

WHO ESARO has dispatched consignments of antiviral (Tamiflu) drugs as well as Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) to each country in the African region to enable them respond rapidly to initial cases. The symptoms of this novel virus typically include fever, cough, sore throat, headache, chills, fatigue and body aches. People are reminded to seek immediate medical attention if they experience these symptoms especially those who have chronic medical problems.

Angola

UNCT Preparedness - The Disaster Management Team (DMT) met to discuss the UN's alignment with the Government's Operational Plan. The national plan is currently being prepared by the Inter-ministerial Commission for the prevention of Influenza A (H1N1). Additionally, a simulation exercise organised by the Operations Management Team was held to assess the functionality of the UNCT's first draft of the Contingency Plan as per the UN System Concept of Operations (CONOPS). UN Agencies have cost-shared for the procurement of seasonal flu vaccinations for all staff and their dependents.

Support to Government and Government Preparedness Actions - WHO continues to provide support to the government with regular updates and dissemination of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials. WHO is also provided technical guidance and support to government on the elaboration of the national contingency plan, following the declaration of Phase 6.

Botswana

Situation Update - Three suspected cases of Influenza A were reported. All cases had a travel history to South Africa.

On arrival the patients were isolated and specimen collected for investigation in National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) in South Africa. Two specimens are negative. Results for the third specimen are still to be released.

UNCT Preparedness – WHO continues to revise the UNCT Pandemic Influenza Contingency Plan.

Support to Government and Government Preparedness Actions - WHO continues to provide technical support through the National Task Force. Rapid Response Teams have been deployed to district levels that are responsible for surveillance at ports of entry. Daily reports are sent regularly to the National Task Force.

Comoros

No new updates.

Lesotho

UNCT Preparedness - The UN-Lesotho Pandemic Task Team has revised its Preparedness and Business Continuity Plan for Influenza A(H1N1) which included the clinical aspects, laboratory and surveillance components. Briefings to sensitise staff are held regularly. Tamiflu and personal protective equipment for the UN system is available

Support to Government and Government Preparedness Actions - WHO and FAO continue to work with the Ministries of Agriculture and Health in strengthening their capacity for preparedness and response. In particular, WHO has supported the Health Sector in conducting orientation sessions and procurement of Tamiflu and personal protective equipment (PPE) for the Health sector. FAO provided technical guidance to the Department of Livestock Services for the surveillance of swine family in the country.

Madagascar

UNCT Preparedness / Support to Government:

1. Safety of staff and assets under their authority:

- Information updated about material and medicinal stock: quantity available, validity of expiry date : ongoing.

2. Continuity of critical operations:

- Nothing significant to report.

3. Support to national authorities:

- Submission of proposals to CFIA to support initiation and implementation of "whole of society approach": on going
- Update of communication strategy before and during pandemic: ongoing
- Establishment of the TORs for an Epidemic Crisis Unit to be set up within the Ministry of Health.
- Crisis response unit: monitoring of UN action plan to meet response readiness indicators prepared by PIC OCHA/ROSA.

Support to Government and Government Preparedness Actions:

- Strengthen border surveillance, in particular at the international airport.
- Reinforce pandemic awareness of medical staff at district level through re-dispatch of technical guidelines on disease surveillance, public health response measures and case management.
- Organize a sensitization session targeted to private medical staff in Antananarivo, through the "Ordre National des Médecins/ONM".

Other - Madagascar Humanitarian Country Team (IASC) meeting held on 14 May 2009 to share information on status of A/H1N1 and to sensitize NGOs for possible elaboration of business continuity plans.

Malawi

UNCT Preparedness – The country continues to update its Pandemic Preparedness Plan and its Business Continuity Plan. Malawi is also preparing for a table-top exercise to test the revised Pandemic preparedness plan.

Support to Government and Government Preparedness Actions – Nothing new to report.

Mauritius

Situation Update – One Influenza A(H1N1) case has been confirmed in Mauritius. The patient has a travel history to Argentina and arrived in Mauritius on 24 June 2009. All those in contact with the patient have been tested and all tests returned back negative.

Support to Government and Government Preparedness Actions - The Ministry of Health has strengthened case surveillance. The national preparedness plan is being reviewed and updated.

Mozambique

UNCT Preparedness – The UN Country Team (UNCT) continue to review and consolidate the UN Contingency plan. The Business Continuity Plan has been updated with a list of UN Department of Staff Security (UNDSS) critical functions during

crises and emergency modes in line with the UN contingency plan of preparedness for and response to pandemic influenza. Additionally, UNOSSC updated UN Security Plan, which includes UN staff and Senior Management Team (SMT) list. UNICEF and WHO have updated their essential and critical staff lists for business continuity.

UNCHR with support from a Multifunctional Team (composed of Refugee and Mozambican leaders, line ministries representatives and Community Health workers/ motivators) have established a task-force for targeting specifically preparedness for H1N1 pandemic in refugee sites. The H1N1 motivators include Refugee and Mozambican volunteers who were trained by UNHCR for Avian Flu preparedness in November 2007 and 2008. The motivators are playing a crucial role in disseminating messages regarding H1N1 knowledge and basic hygiene to prevent and contain the spread of the virus.

Support to Government and Government Preparedness Actions – On 22 June 2009, WHO supported a one day workshop for the training of 13 lab technicians from all provinces on influenza A specimen collection. WHO conducted training sessions for more than 100 health workers among them clinicians, surveillance officers and International Health Regulation (IHR) focal points in Quelimane district in Zambezia province on preparedness and response activities for Influenza A/H1N1 and rapid containment.

Additionally WHO provided support to a Provincial health on monitoring of existing public health Education Information and Communication materials on Cholera and Influenza A H1N1. The UNCT continue to support the consolidation of National Contingency plan for preparedness and response to Pandemic Influenza, including H1N1.

Namibia

UNCT Preparedness - Currently, the UNCT is revising the UN Pandemic Influenza preparedness plan based on guidelines provided by PIC/OCHA. WHO has printed and handed over to the Ministry of Health and Social Services 4,000 copies of case management posters for distribution to all public and private health facilities.

Support to Government and Government Preparedness Actions – WHO and UNICEF continue to support the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) by participating in the National Health Emergency Management Committee, which is held twice a week. The Ministry secured 20,000 doses of Tamiflu and 200,000 kits of personal protection equipment (PPE). With the support from the private sector and other partners, the MoHSS has printed Health Passports an Information, Education and Communication tool to raise awareness about the signs and symptoms of the disease. The health passport is being distributed at airports to all travellers both leaving and entering the country.

Seychelles

UNCT Preparedness – The country has completed revising its Contingency plan, including the purchase of sufficient medical supplies for all staff members.

Support to Government and Government Preparedness Actions - From 9 – 10 July 2009, a national table-top simulation exercise was held with various Government Departments and the UN Country Office, with support from the Regional Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for Southern Africa (OCHA ROSA). Fifty participants attended the table-top simulation.

South Africa

Situation Update – As at 7 July 2009, there are 31 laboratory-confirmed cases of novel influenza A/H1N1. Of these cases, 16 are linked to a sporting event at a university within Johannesburg. There are no confirmed community-wide transmission to date.

UNCT Preparedness - The preparedness plan is yet to be finalized once UN Agencies have completed their Business Continuity Plans. The Preparedness plan will be submitted to the Senior Management Team (SMT) shortly.

Swaziland

UNCT Preparedness – The UNCT continues to update its Contingency Plan for pandemic influenza. Briefings to all UN staff are held frequently on the technical aspects and characteristics of the virus as well as on preventive measures. A Pandemic Steering Committee has been reactivated and is reviewing current preparedness measures. The UNCT is carrying out an inventory of medical supplies for the treatment of the virus. The UNCT has also procured additional stocks of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for staff.

Support to Government and Government Preparedness Actions – WHO is providing technical support to the multi-sectoral pandemic preparedness Committee. Following confirmation of the first two cases in South Africa, WHO and the MOH held a Health Facilities Case Management and Preparedness meeting with senior medical officers from national and regional hospitals, representatives of the Central Medical Stores as well as clinician / laboratory staff. Issues discussed focused on case investigation, specimen collection, transportation and clinical case management. While the majority of cases were likely to be isolated in their homes, hospitals are identifying a suitable isolation facility for severe cases.

Civil Aviation staff have been briefed about what actions to taken should they have a suspected case. A screening form based on WHO standards has been distributed to health facilities at all points of entry into the country.

Zambia

Support to Government and Government Preparedness Actions - The country has a National Contingency Plan for pandemic influenza. WHO has identified short-term isolation facilities for high risk areas. Procurement of Tamiflu and protective equipment for UN staff is currently underway to address shortfalls.

To ensure adequate preparedness and to mitigate the local impact of a pandemic, MoH and partners developed a Health Sector Response plan to undertake the following activities: 1. Reduce opportunities for A/H1N1 infection, 2. Strengthen risk communication to communities, 3. Strengthen early warning system, 4. Identify and equip facilities for managing patients, 5. Mitigation of disease occurrence, 6. Reduce morbidity, mortality and social disruption, and 7. Conduct research to guide response measures. To implement the above activities, US\$ 1,2m is needed.

Zimbabwe

Nothing new to report.

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