

## Regional Update No. 8: Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Global Outbreak Date: 27 October 2009

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Since the start of the global outbreak of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009, a total of 13,044 confirmed cases and 102 deaths have been registered in southern Africa.

### REGIONAL CONTEXT

Since the previous update of 05 October 2009, an additional 1,153 cases and 32 deaths have been reported in region, which indicates that the epidemic is still spreading.

Although most cases of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 are relatively mild, severe cases do occur. There is a serious concern that the Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 virus could mutate into a much more virulent strain, and that the next wave of outbreaks could occur soon.

An International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) regional workshop on Pandemic Preparedness took place in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 22 to 23 October 2009. This was the first meeting of the ICAO Cooperative Arrangement for the prevention of the spread of communicable disease through air travel. The meeting was preceded by an airport simulation exercise which looked at the procedure at the airport to limit the importation of pandemic influenza virus and other communicable diseases in the country.

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 in Southern Africa			
Country	Cases (confirmed)	Deaths	Date (up to)
Angola	24	-	21-Oct-09
Botswana	23	-	19-Oct-09
Comoros	No data		
Lesotho	54	-	19-Oct-09
Madagascar	233	-	24-Oct-09
Malawi	4	-	19-Oct-09
Mauritius <sup>1</sup>	69	8	19-Oct-09
Mozambique	48	2	21-Oct-09
Namibia	69	1	19-Oct-09
Seychelles	3	-	19-Oct-09
South Africa	12,378	91	19-Oct-09
Swaziland	54	-	16-Oct-09
Zambia	73	-	09-Oct-09
Zimbabwe	12	-	09-Oct-09
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,044</b>	<b>102</b>	

1. Is monitoring the pandemic but is no longer reporting individual cases.

### Angola

**Situation Update** As of 21 October 2009, a total of 24 cases has been confirmed. As Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) real-time testing is now available in Angola, it is expected that the number of confirmed cases will rise.

**Support to Government and Government Preparedness Actions** The World Health Organization (WHO) country team continues to support the Angolan Government in:

- Epidemiological surveillance activities;
- The preparation of and participation in Inter-Ministerial Commission meetings;

- Adjusting the draft National Vaccine Deployment Plan according to the latest guidelines. This Plan will be presented at the WHO Regional Office for Africa (AFRO) Technical Meeting on immunization plans, to take place in Abuja, Nigeria, from 16 to 20 November 2009.

**Actions taken by Government** The Government is holding weekly Inter-Ministerial Sub-Commission Meetings, during which feedback is provided on current activities and the epidemiological situation. The National Institute of Public Health now has the capacity to test suspected cases of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 using PCR. Surveillance systems are also being improved by extending the use of Influenza A rapid tests to four provinces: Uige, Cabinda, Benguela and Huila. Training activities are also ongoing, with 82 health staff from public reference hospitals and private clinics already trained in case management. Surveillance activities at ports are also continuing, although no cases have been detected at these points of entry. Public awareness campaigns are ongoing, with local radio and television channels regularly broadcasting educational messages on Pandemic (H1N1) 2009. In Luanda, nearly 1,300 information pamphlets have been distributed through schools, churches and grassroots organizations.

## Madagascar

**Situation update** As of 24 October, a total of 233 confirmed cases have been reported in Madagascar, and no deaths. Local transmission of the influenza virus has led the MOH and Ministry of Education to close down one school for 5 days in the capital city of Antananarivo. It is noted that the school has 40 confirmed cases among learners.

**UNCT Preparedness** The UNCT Contingency Plan is finalised and is to be forwarded to headquarters.

**Support to national government** The UNCT, through UNICEF and WHO, are supporting the government in developing and disseminating communication messages to the general public to raise awareness on pandemic influenza. Flyers have been distributed to all schools in the capital. The Ministry of Education and MOH have strengthened the surveillance activities in schools that have experienced spikes in number of H1N1 and a meeting was held with school principals in the capital to give guidance on reporting and control of the virus.

**Actions taken by the Government** The government has set up three hotlines for reports of the A/H1N1- one green number for each of the three mobile operators in the country. The ministry has also formed a mobile health team, which can intervene immediately in cases displaying clinical signs of A/H1N1 influenza.

As a follow up on the development of a Business Continuity Plan (BCP), the vice prime-minister's office has sent letters to the nine key sectors to nominate focal points for the BCP. The MOH initiated the development of the BCP.

## Malawi

**Situation Update** No new information to report since previous update.

## Mozambique

**Situation Update** As of 21 October 2009, a total of 48 confirmed cases and two deaths have been reported. All confirmed cases were tested by the South African National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD). Between 6 August and 12 October 2009, a total of 101 suspected cases have been reported in six of the country's ten provinces, with Maputo City being the worst affected (81 suspected cases).

**UNCT Preparedness** Due to national elections scheduled for late October, the planned UN Pandemic Influenza Coordination Team (PIC) mission to Mozambique has been postponed from 20 October to November. The objective of this mission will be to:

- Support the finalization of the UNCT Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan;
- Support the facilitation of a Table Top Exercise; and
- Support the UNCT in the implementation of the Central Fund for Influenza Action (CFIA) project.

**Support to Government and Government Preparedness Actions** WHO has donated an Influenza A Investigation Kit to the National Reference Laboratory of Immunology. This kit includes the following modules: basic personal protective equipment (PPE), sample transport, collection of respiratory samples and common items. WHO is also working with the National Institute for Social Communication (INCS) to reinforce community awareness on Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 prevention measures.

**Actions taken by Government** The Ministry of Health (MOH), with support from WHO, continues to work on strengthening epidemiological surveillance for Pandemic (H1N1) 2009, as well as on social mobilization. Government is also finalizing its National Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan.

## South Africa

**Situation Update** As of 19 October 2009, a total of 12,378 cases and 91 deaths has been confirmed. Gauteng province has been the most severely affected, with 5,506 reported cases (44% of total). Children and young adults appear to be the most at-risk age group. During the month of October the number of cases decreased dramatically to a daily range of 1 to 2.

## Swaziland

**Situation Update** As of 16 October 2009, a total of 54 cases has been confirmed, affecting three of the country's four regions.

**Support to Government and Government Preparedness Actions** In addition to measures mentioned in previous reports, the MOH is being supported by the UNCT in developing a vaccine initiative proposal, which will form part of the National Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan.

**Actions taken by Government** Surveillance activities are continuing, including the screening of learners in schools that have experienced spikes in the number of cases of Influenza-like illnesses (ILI).

## Zambia

**Situation Update** As of 09 October 2009, a total of 73 cases have been confirmed, with the most affected provinces being Lusaka (32 cases) and Copperbelt (19 cases). Data on probable cases have been difficult to obtain and verify from province and district level, possibly as a result of poor communication infrastructure. However, WHO and MOH are discussing ways of strengthening reporting mechanisms.

**UNCT Preparedness** An H1N1 Task Force has been reviewing and finalising the UNCT BCP, which will be presented at the October UNCT Meeting. UNCT coordination in dealing with Government Ministries on disaster management issues is being strengthened, with the aim of eliminating the duplication of efforts. The UNCT will also be discussing the updating of information on its Tamiflu stocks at the October UNCT Meeting. The United Nations Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) continues to hold regular meetings.

**Support to Government and Government Preparedness Actions** The UNCT is supporting the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) in assessing the need to install HF/VHF radios in Provincial Disaster Management Units

throughout the country. Two Information Technology (IT) personnel (one from UNICEF and one from WFP) have been identified through the Resident Coordinator to provide the necessary support.

The UNCT is to support the Government in conducting a national simulation exercise covering all sectors likely to be affected by a pandemic. The Office of the Vice President has taken the lead in organising this exercise, which will be held from 16 to 19 November 2009. The simulation will comprise of a desktop exercise and two field-based exercises, which includes a cross-border scenario. The UNCT is also providing technical support to the National Epidemic Preparedness, Prevention, Control and Management Committee (NEPCC&MC) meetings, which are attended by the Ministers of Health, Education, Agriculture and Cooperatives and Local Government and Housing.

WHO has donated 4,000 doses of Tamiflu to the MOH, as well as copies of the International Health Regulations. The United States of America's Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and WHO also provided PPE and diagnostic support to the University Teaching Hospital (UTH) Virology Lab. WHO also supported a rapid assessment of preparedness against A/H1N1 at Ports of Entry countrywide earlier this year.

**Actions taken by Government** Two quarantine and isolation facilities have been established in Lusaka district and at the Lusaka International Airport. Twenty health personnel have been trained on viral haemorrhagic fever and infection control. Forty provincial and district surveillance officers have been trained since May 2009, with the support of WHO. Standard operating procedures for case management have been established. Surveillance guidelines on the Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 virus have been developed and disseminated to districts and provincial health offices. Health staff at ports has been put on alert. Clinical guidelines on human infection have been compiled, with the support of WHO and CDC, as well as guidelines on the collection and handling of specimens.

Two laboratories - one at the University of Zambia (a Level 3 laboratory) and another at the UTH - are processing specimens, supported by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and WHO. Laboratory staff has been trained in sampling and examination. Sentinel sites for surveillance have been identified in all 9 provinces, as well as in selected districts and ports. Tamiflu have been made available to all the provincial health offices and emergency stockpiles are available at the National Health Office. With support from WHO, assessments have been conducted at various locations.

Government has also developed a Human Health Action Plan on A/H1N1, which focuses on, amongst other areas, reducing infection opportunities and strengthening early warning systems. However, the Action Plan is yet to receive support from partners for implementation of activities.

The Ministry of Health has requested support in acquiring paediatric Tamiflu, due to the high occurrence of cases in children. Furthermore, a request has received by the WHO Country Office from MOH expressing the need for stock of the Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 vaccine.

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