Health Update

In June, nearly 1,000 suspected cases of measles were reported nationwide, the majority (70 per cent) from Amhara and Oromia regions. Some 150 woredas across the country (except Dire Dawa and Harar) were affected by measles outbreaks since January 2014. Similarly, 117 suspected meningitis cases were reported from Amhara, Gambella, Oromia, SNNP and Tigray regions in June. In Afar region, a laboratory investigation is underway following reports of suspected cases of acute febrile illness (AFI) in Dubti woreda. The Ethiopian government and health partners continue to strengthen case management and surveillance in all outbreak-affected and neighbouring woredas.

In Gambella region, the Government and partners enhanced disease surveillance following increasing reports of acute jaundice cases in Leitchor camp, indicative of a potential Hepatitis E outbreak. Suspected cases of yellow fever were also reported in refugee camps in Gambella. Since mid-December, 93,813 South Sudanese refugee children across the camps and entry points were vaccinated against measles, 76,421 children against polio and 42,056 received vitamin A supplement. The Regional Health Bureau in collaboration with the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI) and health partners continues to strengthen acute watery diarrohea (AWD) outbreak preparedness and response measures following reports of a cholera outbreak in neighboring South Sudan, which was declared in mid-May. For more information, contact: who-wro@et.afro.who.int

Refugee Update

Ethiopia hosts the largest South Sudanese refugee population in the region, with 169,000 new arrivals registered in Gambella region as of 8 July. The influx continues at an average daily arrival rate of 883 people. Some 8,443 refugees were registered since 1 July 2014. In addition to conflict, the recent arrivals cite food insecurity as the reason for their flight. The region also hosts 46,362 South Sudanese refugees who crossed the Ethiopian border prior to the current influx.

The new arrivals are relocated to Kule 2 refugee camp, which is fast approaching its full capacity. The most vulnerable refugees, including the sick, disabled, the elderly and breastfeeding mothers, are relocated by helicopter. Last week, WFP started the distribution of July’s food ration. While the 5,310 emergency tents airlifted in the country by UNHCR will improve the shelter situation in the Gambella camps, there is need to expedite the construction of the transitional shelter structures (tukuls). The temporary shelters cannot withstand the heavy rains during the kiremt rainy season. Preliminary results of the recently completed nutrition surveys in Kule 1, Kule 2 and Leitchor camps revealed concerning nutritional status among the refugees. According to the survey, the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates were above the emergency threshold of 15 per cent, in all three camps. The mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) malnutrition indicator showed improvements in the nutritional status of refugees relocated to the camps, compared to the MUAC screening conducted at the entry points at the initial phase of the emergency. The final report will be released soon. Critical gaps continue to be reported in child protection and in Education in Emergencies (EiE) interventions. Some 90 per cent of the refugees are women and children, including 70 per cent children.

For more information, contact gegziabk@unhcr.org

Meanwhile, to minimize the impact of the refugee influx on the host community in Gambella, UNICEF developed a six-month plan (July-December), including provision of water through the construction of one deep well in Nyinenyang town, strengthening the health and nutrition services in the host community, and establishing child-friendly spaces in community schools. For more information, contact awesterbeek@unicef.org

No information received from Agriculture and Nutrition sectors this week