

# Overseas briefs

Source: World Health Organization (WHO)

## Cholera

**Somalia.** Outbreaks of acute diarrhoea and cholera have continued to occur in various parts of Somalia since late 1996. Cholera has been confirmed and continues to be reported in Mogadishu and Merca and new outbreaks have been reported in Lower Shabelle region. The total number of cholera cases (including suspect cases) reported since the first case on 30 November 1996 is 1,535, with 47 deaths.

The number of cases in Mogadishu North has almost tripled in the last weeks following recent heavy rainfalls. Although the treatment centre there is coping well with the increased cases, medical supplies are running short and WHO is trying to purchase these elsewhere. ECHO (European Community for Humanitarian Action) is also providing support and sending supplies. A WHO consultant who was in Mogadishu to study cholera transmission and assist in setting up a cholera committee will now extend his stay to help deal with the increasing number of cases. However, in recently affected rural areas coordination of control activities is difficult.

Based on trends of cholera outbreaks in previous years, a decline in numbers is expected in the next six to eight weeks. The remote areas affected continue to be difficult to reach. Cholera task forces are meeting regularly to review the situation.

**Zaire.** A confirmed cholera outbreak has been reported in Kasese refugee camp near Kinsangani in Haut-Zaire Province. A WHO team in Kinsangani together with teams from Médecins sans Frontières and UNICEF are currently assisting in the implementation of control measures for this outbreak.

Since the beginning of 1997 suspected cholera outbreaks have been reported in several regions of Zaire, particularly Kinshasa and Equateur Provinces. Cholera treatment kits have been sent to Kinshasa and a WHO consultant is visiting the area affected.

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