

WHO ZAMBIA

QUARTER 2 NEWSLETTER

APRIL - JUNE

In this issue

Story highlight	_____	01
ECHO dates WHO, UNICEF	_____	02
National Cholera intra-action review conducted	_____	03
Accelerating Action: WHO CCEI Mission to Zambia	_____	04
Govt calls on Partners and stakeholders to intensify efforts to save mothers and newborns	_____	05
Other Stories	_____	06

STORY HIGHLIGHT

A COMMUNITY APPROACH - THE STORY OF THAMBO VILLAGE CHOLERA SURVIVOR

In the heart of Kasenengwa District in Zambia's Eastern Province lies Thambo, a small, closely-knit village where everyone knows each other by name. Life here is simple; days are marked by the rhythms of nature and community bonds.

On 4 June, a quiet storm brewed within this serene setting, a storm named cholera. Here, Kasenengwa's index case hails.

Raphael Zulu, a father of five, woke up with what he thought was a simple stomach upset.

"I thought I had malaria and went on to take some medication for it. However, diarrhea set in, and within minutes, I began to vomit too," narrates Raphael Zulu, the index case for cholera in Kasenengwa district. By midmorning, Raphael was severely dehydrated and weak.

Overwhelmed with worry, Raphael's wife quickly asked her neighbours to help rush her husband to Muzeyi Mission Rural Health Center, 12 kilometers from the village.

"The nearest health facility to us is very far. I was afraid we would not make it in time," says Janet Zulu, Raphael's wife. When we got to the clinic, healthcare workers told us he had cholera, and he was admitted," she added.

A threat only heard of in passing was now real and present: cholera was now in Thambo village.

All six households in the village have one common water source, a borehole, where Mr Zulu's fomites were washed. Because of this, five other people from the surrounding households contracted cholera.

"Four of my other neighbours also got cholera. We all get our water from one borehole at the end of the village, approximately a kilometer away from my house," Mr. Zulu said.

Raphael and surrounding households walk about a kilometer to access water, and as such, this distance inhibits the practice of good hygiene.

"Because of the distance to the borehole, we only fetch water at least twice a day. We must use the water prudently to avoid the women and young girls walking such a long distance every now and then." Mr. Zulu said.

Raphael and surrounding households walk about a kilometer to access water, and as such, this distance inhibits the practice of good hygiene.

"Because of the distance to the borehole, we only fetch water at least twice a day. We must use the water prudently to avoid the women and young girls walking such a long distance every now and then." Mr. Zulu said.



Further, to address the challenge of Thambo village being 12km away from the nearest health facility, WHO, working with the district health team and Thambo community members, set up a mini oral rehydration corner (ORC) to help with quicker access to oral rehydration salts and managing cholera cases.

Community members were educated about cholera, clean water, sanitation, and hygiene, and at least two bottles of chlorine were distributed per household.

Six community-based volunteers from Kasenengwa district were trained in the Community Integrated Cholera Response Strategy and deployed to Thambo village to manage the ORC, cholera cases and ultimately respond to the outbreak, saving lives.

To support the cholera outbreak response in Eastern province, WHO, working with the provincial and district health teams, trained one hundred (100) community health workers in the Cholera integrated community management strategy – a WHO Zambia initiative to enhance cholera response at the community level.

"I am glad I am fine now. I have learned how to practice good hygiene and drink safe water. I want to thank the health workers for saving my life, the community, and everyone else for bringing water closer to us, our lives have surely changed" says Raphael Zulu, a Thambo cholera survivor.

ECHO dates WHO, UNICEF

The European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) provided USD 1 million to respond to the cholera outbreak in Zambia, supporting the strengthening of health systems and building resilient communities.

ECHO generously funded the expansion of the cholera response plan to support high-burden locations in Lusaka and other provinces through the enhancement of Cholera Treatment Centres (CTCs), the establishment of more Oral Rehydration Corners (ORCs), provision of WASH and health supplies, improvement of community-based volunteer work, and the existing referral systems.

This comprehensive support aimed to reduce cholera transmission and mortality by increasing access to life-saving treatment and prevention services. From 20 – 24 May, ECHO conducted a monitoring visit to Zambia to observe the progress made in the emergency action and the degree to which the results were achieved.

During the visit, representatives from ECHO, WHO, and UNICEF observed firsthand the impact of these interventions. They visited CTCs and ORCs in affected areas, interacting with healthcare workers and community volunteers who are critical in the response. The visit highlighted the importance of community engagement and capacity building, showcasing the dedication of local teams working tirelessly to control the outbreak.

The monitoring visit also provided an opportunity to assess the implementation challenges and explore areas for further support. Discussions emphasized the need for continued collaboration between government agencies, humanitarian partners, and communities to sustain and scale the response. ECHO's support has been instrumental in bridging gaps and ensuring that essential services reach those most in need, especially in communities hard hit by the outbreak.



As the cholera response continues, the partnership between ECHO, UNICEF, and WHO remains vital in protecting vulnerable populations and preventing future outbreaks. This initiative's success underscores the importance of robust, coordinated efforts in addressing public health emergencies and building resilient health systems.



National Cholera Intra-Action Review Conducted



The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with key partners, including the World Health Organization (WHO), held the National Cholera Intra-Action Review (IAR) in Lusaka. The review, which took place from April 8th to 12th, brought together stakeholders from various sectors to assess the country's response to the cholera outbreak and strengthen future preparedness and response strategies.

The IAR aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of Zambia's cholera response efforts and identify best practices and areas for improvement. Representatives from the Ministry of Health, other government line ministries, health workers, international organizations, and civil society participated in the comprehensive review. The forum provided a platform for open discussions, evidence-based analysis, and collaborative planning to enhance the country's resilience against cholera outbreaks.



Speaking at the opening session, Dr. Kennedy Lishimpi, Zambia's Permanent Secretary for Technical Services in the Ministry of Health, commended the collaborative efforts and reiterated the government's dedication to eliminating cholera as a public health threat. "This review, we believe, will provide valuable insights and a clear path forward in fighting future cholera outbreaks and eventually eliminating cholera. Together, we can build a healthier, cholera-free Zambia," he stated.



The WHO Country Representative for Zambia, Dr. Nathan Bakyaita, also praised the comprehensive nature of the review, noting that the lessons learned will be instrumental in strengthening national cholera preparedness. "The IAR demonstrates Zambia's commitment to safeguarding public health through collaboration and continuous improvement. If we engage openly and freely for productive deliberations, the public health system will benefit immensely from this review," Dr. Bakyaita remarked.

The outcomes of the National Cholera IAR will be used to update Zambia's Cholera Prevention and Control Plan, ensuring that the country is better prepared to respond to future outbreaks. The Ministry of Health, with support from WHO and other partners, is committed to implementing the recommendations from the review to protect communities and save lives.

ACCELERATING ACTION, WHO CERVICAL CANCER ELIMINATION INITIATIVE MISSION TO ZAMBIA

On April 18 -19, the Cervical Cancer Elimination Initiative, led by the WHO Headquarters Director for Non-communicable diseases, Dr Bente Mikkelsen, undertook a mission to Zambia to witness firsthand insights into enablers and barriers to services across the three pillars (vaccination, screening and treatment). This mission underscored the Organization's commitment to supporting Zambia in achieving the 90-70-90 targets by 2030.

The team engaged in a series of country dialogues to gain a comprehensive understanding of the barriers and enablers affecting the implementation of cervical cancer prevention and control measures in Zambia. Discussions with government officials, healthcare providers, cooperating partners, civil society organizations, and NGOs provided valuable firsthand perspectives on the achievements and challenges faced at various healthcare system levels.

"We continue to make significant strides in the fight against cervical cancer and we are committed to accelerating progress towards WHO targets by 2030. By harnessing the HPV testing intervention, we hope to reduce the burden of cervical cancer and save the lives of many women" stated Hon Sylvia Masebo, Minister of Health.

Further, the mission undertook a learning visit to the Cancers Disease Hospital, Chipata and Kanyama First Level Hospitals, witnessing firsthand in-country best practices, challenges, successes and identifying opportunities and areas for additional Cervical Cancer Elimination Initiative (CCEI) support.

"It was an honour to witness the dedication of the health workers, despite the challenges that confront them, they are still committed to delivering the quality services. We need to work together to meet their need for additional training, better equipment and sufficient consumables," said Dr Bente Mikkelsen.

By engaging with local partners and stakeholders, the team documented existing collaborations and explored opportunities to leverage resources more effectively. The mission identified potential synergies with UN agencies, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector, aiming to create a coordinated and sustainable approach to cervical cancer prevention and control.





GOVT CALLS ON PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO INTENSIFY EFFORTS TO SAVE MOTHERS AND NEWBORNS

The Government of Zambia has called on partners and stakeholders to redouble their efforts to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality rates in the country. This appeal came during the opening of the Maternal and Newborn Health Summit, held under the theme “Accelerating the Reduction of Maternal and Neonatal Deaths in Zambia through a Multi-Sectoral Approach.”

The Vice President of Zambia, Mrs. W.K Mutale Nalumango, speaking on behalf of the Republican President, called for new policies and financial commitments to help save the lives of mothers and newborns. “The Maternal and Newborn Health Summit is not just a platform for dialogue but a rallying cry for all stakeholders to take decisive action in safeguarding the lives of Zambian mothers and newborns,” she stated.

The summit participants were drawn from all sectors and supporting ministries. They were given a platform to discuss challenges contributing to maternal and neonatal deaths, particularly the three delays: delay in seeking care, reaching care, and receiving care. Through collaborative efforts, stakeholders held sessions to discuss and develop strategies to overcome the identified barriers to care, improve access to quality maternal and newborn health care, and refine resource mobilization efforts.

The United Nations Resident Coordinator, Ms Beatrice Mutali, highlighted the need for concerted efforts to address maternal and newborn deaths. “The United Nations stands in solidarity with Zambia in its pursuit of improving maternal and newborn health outcomes. We believe that the summit’s deliberations will catalyze the momentum towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3, ensuring healthy lives, and promoting well-being for all at all ages.

The Government further called for an urgent strengthening of the healthcare system to ensure that every woman has access to quality antenatal, delivery, and postnatal care.

Zambia has in the recent years seen a reduction in maternal mortality rates. The facility maternal mortality ratio (MPDSR) has decreased from 137 per 100,000 live births in 2020, to 123 in 2021 and to 118 in 2022. These figures highlight the significant efforts of Government and partners are putting in fighting maternal and neonatal mortality. However, the country continues to face high maternal and neonatal mortality rates.

As Zambia moves forward, the government has pledged to enhance coordination and accountability mechanisms to ensure effective implementation of maternal and newborn health strategies. The call to action is clear: the lives of Zambian mothers and newborns depend on the commitment and collaboration of all stakeholders.

Other stories

In Brief...



Drought emergency response

Following the Government's declaration of the drought as a national disaster, the United Nations in Zambia stepped up efforts to assess the situation and support the government's response plan. The drought has severely impacted crop productivity, threatening food security and the livelihoods of communities in 84 districts.

In this regard, the UN Crisis Coordinator for El Nino and La Nina Response, Reena Ghelani, visited Zambia to witness firsthand the impact of the drought on communities. The team had the opportunity to visit health facilities, farmers, and schools in Lusaka and surrounding districts where they talked to community members and their leaders.



Zambia hosts regional laboratory directors meeting

From 20 to 24 May 2024, Zambia had the privilege to host the Africa Regional Polio Directors' Meeting. Over 30 polio laboratory directors from across the region convened to share experiences, discuss challenges and stay informed on latest innovations and technologies for the Global Polio Laboratory Network success and ultimately, polio eradication.



ICT Equipment handed over to MoH

With the generous funding of Gavi, WHO Zambia handed over 2 servers, 2 SAN storage devices, 6 JetBrains licenses and 1 Microsoft SQL Server Enterprise with software Assurance, 19 Dell Laptops, 20 Internet Mi-Fis and 116 routers and related accessories, all valued at US \$ 87,048.95 to support healthcare professionals with the tools to collect, analyze, and utilize immunization data effectively.

Social Media highlights



World Health Organization Zambia
20 May · 🌐

Zambia is honored to host the Africa Regional Polio Laboratory Directors' Meeting. A crucial step towards a polio-free continent! 🌍

Over 30 polio laboratories from across the region have convened to share experiences, discuss challenges, and stay informed about the latest innovations, technologies, and requirements for the Global Polio Laboratory Network (GPLN) success and, ultimately, polio eradication.

Let's unite for a healthier future. #EndPolio #HealthForAll #zambiahost

Ministry of Health Zambia Zambia National Public Health Institute World Health Organization (WHO)

👍 Like 💬 Comment 📧 Send ➦ Share



Photo highlights



**We thank you for your
continued support in
our efforts to contribute
toward achieving
Zambia's health goals.**

Contact

WHO Zambia
UN Annex Building
Corner Andrew Mwenya/Beit Road
Roadspark, PO Box 32346, Lusaka

www.afro.who.int/countries/zambia
X: @WHOZambia
Facebook: World Health Organization
Zambia