

# **GUINEA: CHOLERA OUTBREAK**

*2 September 1998 198*

## ***Information Bulletin N° 01***

### ***The Disaster***

A cholera epidemic broke out in the city of Conakry, the capital of the Republic of Guinea, in early August. Ministry of Health officials confirmed the epidemic within several days on national media.

By the end of August, fifty-six persons had been hospitalized and two had died. Although the source of the epidemic has not been identified, all reports to date ascribe this sudden outbreak to a lack of hygiene and overcrowded living conditions. The rainy season has now begun in Guinea, and could be a factor, as rain water is often collected in contaminated containers for household needs.

A national committee to combat the epidemic was immediately set up and reports directly to the Ministry of Health. This committee is responsible for:

- caring for and following up declared cases and their contacts,
- organizing and mobilizing medical and paramedical personnel,
- mobilizing and managing financial, material and human resources,
- disseminating information and health education,
- epidemiological surveillance.

### ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

The Red Cross Society of Guinea (RCG) is a full member of the national committee to combat cholera. At the very outset of the epidemic it mobilized 100 of its first-aid workers to disseminate prevention messages among associations, affected families, at the market place and in other public areas within the five communes of Conakry.

As part of the cholera awareness and prevention campaigns, the Federation Delegation in Guinea had 500 leaflets printed for distribution in public areas. The delegation in Abidjan ordered 2,000 more leaflets and is providing its technical support to this operation.

A special team of ten first-aid workers has been specifically assigned to Donka hospital in Conakry where an emergency cholera-treatment centre has been set up. They are responsible for ensuring prevention among the hospital staff, patients and visitors. Should the needs increase, this team can be expanded.

A RCG doctor and the head of the Federation delegation attend the daily national committee meetings.

The Federation provided the cholera-treatment centre with a 5-KW generator as a back-up during the many electricity shortages which occur during the night.

## ***Government Action***

The Ministry of Health, responsible for co-ordinating the national committee, has already provided the basics to launch the operations. In view of the number of cases announced, shortages have already been identified (in particular far too few beds for cholera cases).

## ***NGO Action***

- MSF, in co-operation with the Ministry of Health, has set up and organized the cholera treatment centre (CTC) at Donka Hospital in Conakry, to which all affected persons are directed.
- WHO plans to send USD 5,000 worth of physiological saline solution and HTH (disinfectant). WHO has further earmarked USD 2,000 for the purchase of supplies.
- GTZ will help purchase 10 vaporizers and will provide petrol for transport, as well as other sanitation supplies.
- The Société des Eaux de Guinée (SEG) (Guinea Water Company) has made available 7 40-kg cans of HTH (disinfectant) which is to be reimbursed.

## ***Needs***

There is an urgent need in the area of sanitation. An evaluation of the situation helped to identify the following needs: maps, beds, basins, pails, blankets, brooms, floorcloths, soap, rubber boots, gloves, rain gear, incineration casks, disinfectant, burial bags, hoes and shovels for digging graves.

In order to pursue this operation, CHF 10,000 has been released from the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to meet the primary emergency needs and to properly equip the first-aid workers for their work.

Donors are urged to provide contributions in order to replace the funds released from DREF.

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