
Health Ministry continues to address healthcare needs of IDPs

Wednesday, 28 October 2009

Last Updated Friday, 30 October 2009

Mobile family planning clinic Press Release from the Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition on the current status of the IDP health care issue as of 15.09.2009 and its response to challenges. With a view of addressing all the health care needs of the IDP population, health sector plans were implemented under the guidance of the national IDP steering Committee chaired by Dr. Ajith Mendis (DGHS) which meets once fortnightly in Colombo. Against the back drop of rampant misinformation both locally and internationally it was deemed as of paramount importance that the national IDP steering Committee informs public of its activities periodically.

At present there are eight zones caring for the IDPs who number 212,000 (approximately). In dealing with this humanitarian crisis the resources of the health ministry were stretched to the very limit. In response to the ministry's call for assistance WHO, UNICEF, IOM, Sarvodaya and many other local and international agencies offered help and has to-date done tremendous amount of work for the betterment of the Healthcare facilities of the IDPs. Based on the population housed in each zone a Primary Health Center (PHC) was established for 5000-10,000 population and a Referral Center was established per 50,000 population to cater for IDPs in each zone. The new developments since last steering committee meeting are: Cheddikulum Hospital • Operation Theatre Complex This was deemed a landmark achievement in IDP Care as it has been a much felt need and the fulfillment of this requirement has plugged a deep vacuum which was created with the sudden influx of IDPs with severe healthcare shortcomings to an area which was not prepared to cater for such a large population. This tremendous achievement was substantiated by the vigorous support of the German Red Cross, AISPO (Italian NGO), Sri Lanka College of Gynecologists and Obstetricians and Family Health Bureau. The operating theatre is fully functional now. Caesarian sections and other general surgeries are thereby conducted daily. Drinking water is provided for the hospital through 20 outlets of a newly built purifier system. A Medical officer for the Blood bank assumed duties and the blood bank is fully functional now. Construction of the Pre term baby unit has been completed by AISPO and was handed over to the hospital. A Transport ventilator was handed over by UNICEF. Cheddikulum hospital kitchen has been fully renovated by AISPO and was handed over to hospital for use. Partitioning of nurses quarters has completed and 10 more nurses could be accommodated easily as and when personnel are available. The Cheddikulum hospital consultants' quarters was fully renovated with attached bathrooms. It is ready for accommodation for approximately 7 consultants. A draft proposal has been forwarded to WHO to implement an intercom communication system. Kitchen-Cheddikulum hospital (new and old Kitchen-Coordinating center/Cheddikulum hospital Menik farm A community centre for psychosocial activities was established in Zone 5 with the support of Citizens Initiative and an art competition was held for the children of the welfare village on 11th October 2009. Maternal and child health issues have always been an important aspect that the ministry has been attempting to streamline. With aides of the donor community fruition of a proper system with Family health clinics been recently established in Zone 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4 with the support of the UNFPA. Two mobile family planning clinics were donated by Family Planning Association (FPA) with the financial assistance from UNFPA. Two primary healthcare centers opened in Zone 6 A and 7 with the support of IOM are functioning well. Construction of two primary health care centers in Zone 6 B & 8 is almost completed by IOM. Construction of a new primary health care center in Zone 0 was completed with the support of Dialog Telecom. Hence now there are 26 healthcare institutions established in the zones (6 referral centers and 20 Primary Healthcare Centers). There are 118 medical officers and 6 consultants permanently attached to Cheddikulum health facility at present. The Indian government is planning to establish "Artificial Limb Fitment Project" by Jaipur Foot, an NGO, in zone 1 Indian hospital. In Cheddikulum hospital there are 25 medical officers and 4 consultants attached permanently at present. Monsoon rains have gradually begun to set in during the last few days and all planned and proposed contingency plans have already been made use of with guidance of the provincial authorities, relevant security personnel as well as the supporting UN and other local and foreign NGOs. No major disease outbreaks were recorded during the past weeks and with the gathered momentum to bring superior healthcare during the rainy period, it would be safe to assume that all possible shortcomings have been hypothesized and plans proposed to subjugate sickness beforehand and to meet any need bound to arise. There has been a decrease in death rates during the past two weeks especially in a setting where rates recorded are far better than the Standards as per the SPHERE guidelines of the WHO. To ensure the accuracy of the cause of death a new procedure was formulated with the concurrence of DIG-Vavuniya, i.e to have a postmortem examination for all deaths among IDP inmates, done by a judicial medical officer. This will further streamline the accuracy of the mortality statistics of the IDP population. The MOH would like to reiterate that the commitment of the MOH is unabatedly strong to provide Preventive and curative healthcare to the IDP population. In spite of the initial difficulties noted and the many negative observations harped upon by many international observers, the MOH has pulled together all parties, International and Local under one umbrella and has served at this time of need quite honorably. The MOH has joined in the national efforts with co-effort from other sectors to bring solace, security and harmony to the population that had undergone these unfortunate circumstances. This communiqué was prepared by the Disaster Preparedness and response Unit of MOH at the request of the DGHS Ministry of Health. Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition Colombo