22 JUNE 2013 - The Ministry of Health in **Saudi Arabia** has announced an **additional four laboratory-confirmed cases with Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus** (MERS-CoV).

The first case is a 43 year-old female in the Eastern Region who has recovered. The other three cases are female health care workers aged 29, 39 and 45 from Taif governorate who cared for two previously confirmed MERS-CoV cases and were detected as part of the outbreak investigation and contact tracing. Two of these three cases were asymptomatic and all three tested weakly positive by PCR.

Globally, from September 2012 to date, WHO has been informed of a total of 68 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV, including 38 deaths.

WHO has received reports of laboratory-confirmed cases originating in the following countries in the Middle East to date: Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). France, Germany, Italy, Tunisia and the United Kingdom also reported laboratory-confirmed cases; they were either transferred there for care of the disease or returned from the Middle East and subsequently became ill. In France, Italy, Tunisia and the United Kingdom, there has been limited local transmission among patients who had not been to the Middle East but had been in close contact with the laboratory-confirmed or probable cases.

Based on the current situation and available information, WHO encourages all Member States to continue their surveillance for severe acute respiratory infections (SARI) and to carefully review any unusual patterns.

Health care providers are advised to maintain vigilance. Recent travellers returning from the Middle East who develop SARI should be tested for MERS-CoV as advised in the current surveillance recommendations. Specimens from patients' lower respiratory tracts should be obtained for diagnosis where possible. Clinicians are reminded that MERS-CoV infection should be considered even with atypical signs and symptoms, such as diarrhoea, in patients who are immunocompromised.

Health care facilities are reminded of the importance of systematic implementation of infection prevention and control (IPC). Health care facilities that provide care for patients suspected or confirmed with MERS-CoV infection should take appropriate measures to decrease the risk of transmission of the virus to other patients, health care workers and visitors.

All Member States are reminded to promptly assess and notify WHO of any new case of infection with MERS-CoV, along with information about potential exposures that may have resulted in infection and a description of the clinical course. Investigation into the source of exposure should promptly be initiated to identify the mode of exposure, so that further transmission of the virus can be prevented.

WHO does not advise special screening at points of entry with regard to this event nor does it currently recommend the application of any travel or trade restrictions.

WHO continues to closely monitor the situation.