18 JULY 2013 - **WHO** has been informed of **six additional laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)** . Of these, two cases have been reported from **Saudi Arabia** and four from the **United Arab Emirates** (UAE).

Both the cases in Saudi Arabia have mild symptoms and are not hospitalized. They are from Asir region. The first case is a 26-year-old man who is a close contact with a previously laboratory-confirmed case and the second case is a 42-year-old woman who is a health care worker.

In the UAE, the four cases are health care workers from two hospitals in Abu Dhabi who took care of an earlier laboratory-confirmed patient. Of these, two cases, a 28-year-old man and 30-year-old woman, did not develop symptoms of illness. The other two cases, both women of 30 and 40 years old, had mild upper respiratory symptoms and are in stable condition.

Globally, from September 2012 to date, WHO has been informed of a total of 88 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV, including 45 deaths.

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 travelers 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 diarrhea, 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 has convened an Emergency Committee under the International Health Regulations (IHR) to advise the Director-General on the status of the current situation. The Emergency Committee, which comprises international experts from all WHO Regions, unanimously advised that, with the information now available, and using a risk-assessment approach, the conditions for a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) have not at present been met.