Sana'a, 28 June 2018 — As the crisis in Al-Hudaydah governorate intensifies, the number of people in need of humanitarian aid continues to increase. Prior to the escalation in conflict, health conditions in the governorate were some of the worst in the country.ÂÂ Today, a number of districts in Al-Hudaydah are reporting the highest number of cases of suspected cholera, as well as the highest severe acute and chronic malnutrition rates in the country.

“WHO is currently supporting two public hospitals in Al-Hudaydah city (Al Thawra and Al Olifi), and two district hospitals on the outskirts of the city (Bait Al Faqiah and Zabib), making sure they have the capacity to receive and treat trauma patients. Trauma supplies were sent weeks ago. We are now continuing the support through the provision of ambulances and the rapid deployment of mobile teams to reach people who cannot travel to medical facilities, and we are working to establish trauma stabilization points in critical areas,” said Dr Nevio Zagaria, WHO Representative in Yemen.

WHO is also supporting 7 therapeutic feeding centers in the governorate to treat children suffering from severe acute malnutrition with medical complications. Additional medicines and supplies for 200 000 medical consultations, including cholera medicines, have been pre-positioned to be delivered as needed, and surrounding governorates have been placed on high alert and equipped with supplies and medicines for the treatment of cholera, specifically for thousands of displaced people coming out of Al-Hudaydah.

“The situation in Al-Hudaydah city grows more dangerous every day. And as the fate of this country is being discussed on the international stage, the reality on the ground is much darker. As the conflict escalates, so must the health response. Basic health services must be guaranteed for the most vulnerable, such as mothers and children, and patients suffering from chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension.”

“Yemen’s health system is extremely fragile, so any additional incident has the potential to overwhelm existing capacities. Population movement out of Al-Hudaydah is creating pressure on operating health facilities and water and sanitation networks in host communities. Local water supplies have been damaged by the conflict, increasing and the risk of cholera and waterborne diseases as people turn to potentially unsafe sources of water,” added Dr Zagaria.

Even before the crisis began, WHO had delivered trauma supplies sufficient for 500 major and minor surgeries to 4 hospitals in Al-Hudaydah; deployed 9 surgical teams; trained 165 health workers on mass casualty management and mental health care; and provided more than 100 000 litres of fuel to 7 hospitals and 450 000 litres of water to three hospitals.