SANA'A, 3 September 2018 – The World Health Organization (WHO) airlifted, through several shipments in August, over 500 tons of essential medicines and medical supplies to Sana'a airport, to be distributed to affected governorates including Aden and southern governorates.

Life-saving cargo

These shipments contain critical life-saving anti-cancer drugs to cover almost 50% of pressing needs of cancer patients for one year. The shipments also include 100 nutrition kits sufficient to meet the needs of more than 5000 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition with medical complications for three months, in addition to various types of rapid diagnostic tests and laboratory reagents to cover the urgent needs and strengthen the capacity of central laboratories and blood banks. Medicines to treat non-communicable diseases (NCDs), surgical instruments, interagency emergency health kits, intravenous (IV) fluids and various types of medications needed by health facilities across the country were also among the medical supplies. Likewise, 50 000 rapid diagnostic tests to effectively diagnose cholera, and 21 trauma kits for mass casualty management were delivered to Aden from Djibouti port.

"This prolonged war has caused many of the acute health needs to go unmet, due to severe shortages of life-saving medical supplies, which is why the arrival of these life-saving cargos has been critical to the response." said Dr Nevio Zagaria, WHO Representative to Yemen.

Support to a rapidly deteriorating health system

"Nearly 16.4 million people require assistance to ensure adequate access to healthcare, and the scale of struggle keeps mounting, with more people joining the list of sufferings. Chronic diseases, noncommunicable diseases, malnutrition, and preventable diseases continue to plague people. Tripling our efforts is not even enough, we need to do the impossible to relieve the pain of civilians who are facing unimaginable hardships".

In Yemen, only 50% of the total health facilities are fully functioning, and yet these health facilities face severe shortages in medicines, equipment, and staff due not only to difficulties in importing medicines and critical supplies, but also to lack of operational funds.

WHO is working hard with its partners to advocate for increased response to these pressing health needs, and these supplies were successfully brought to the country thanks to the generous support of the World Bank, USAID/OFDA, the EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Germany, Emirates Red Crescent, King Salman Humanitarian Aid & Relief Center (KSRelief), UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and Japan.

WHO Media Team