

# Position water-borne diseases and addressing the potential for

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Position Paper for the World Health Organization  
The issues presented before the World Health Organization are The issue of controlling the spread of water-borne diseases and Addressing the potential for Global Epidemics.

Somalia is committed to preventing the spread of water-borne diseases, and coordination of countries to prevent global epidemics. The issue of controlling the spread of water-borne diseases  
Water-borne diseases are extremely virulent diseases which can kill both children and adults. These are caused by disease-causing microbes which contaminate the water.

Inadequate water supply, lack of proper sanitation and intake of contaminated food have been increasing chances of getting infected with water-borne diseases in Somalia. Across Somalia, health authorities always fear sudden outbreaks of cholera and other water-borne diseases following natural disasters. Water-borne diseases are extremely dangerous as they put the health of citizens in danger. Ongoing conflict of drought and famine has resulted in various water-borne diseases, specially Cholera, which has adversely affected the citizens of Somalia.

The after-effect of the conflict leads to displacement of populations, environmental changes, and increased vector breeding sites. Nearly 5.5 million people became at risk of contracting water-borne diseases after the drought.

In the beginning of 2017, Somalia experienced a large-scale outbreak of cholera which resulted in a cumulative total of 53,015 cases of cholera and Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD) causing 795 deaths. These are life-threatening, special to children, due to the loss of fluids from the body and

lead to unnecessary pain and suffering of people. As Somalia is disproportionately affected by threats of water-borne diseases, establishing and strengthening an early warning system for the outbreaks of these diseases is imperative. As of November 2017, WHO collaborated with the Somalia Federal Ministry of Health and distributed more than 105 tons of medical supplies to health authorities throughout the country. WHO will continue to coordinate with Ministry of Health ensuring the availability of medical treatment services and accessibility of these services to as many citizens as possible. Last year, 54 health workers were trained in cholera surveillance, case management, infection control, and prevention.

Bounteous contributions from the Federal Government of Germany, the United Nations Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF), and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) has made it possible for WHO to supply a diverse amount of medicines and medical supplies to Somalia. Campaigns should be conducted for the individuals of the nation to educate them on hygiene and sanitation. In addition to that, an adequate water supply must be available to everyone at all times. Addressing the potential for Global Epidemics As there is an exponential growth in the world's population, chances of global epidemics have increased.

Even with the modern advances in medicine, the rise in the globalization of the worldly society is increasing the risk of epidemics. This is due to the close contact people have on a daily basis in populated environments. Confronting these potential risks is important to the Federal Republic of Somalia, for the Republic has had to contend with many epidemics.

Developed countries are properly prepared for outbreaks, while lesser developed countries, like Somalia, are at a disadvantage due to the lack of essential resources. Access to basic and life-saving health care services is vital and needs to be put into consideration. With an epidemic in the world, there is a possibility of a pandemic if the epidemic is not isolated and treated properly.

Throughout the past decade, Somalia has undergone various epidemics which have harshly affected the population, especially children. One of the main risk factors for disease outbreaks was the drought, which resulted in a sudden epidemic of cholera, measles, and malaria across the country. As of 24 October 2017, almost 19000 suspected measles cases were reported. More than 80% of the victims were children under 10 years of age. These have a devastating impact on communities and are worsening the population's vulnerability.

Civil War also contributes to the spread of infectious diseases as equipment and displaced people are constantly moving to different places, carrying with them harmful pathogens. Wars also encourage widespread mass migrations. Along with migrants not having immunity to the diseases endemic in the region, they might also bring along with them diseases common in their place. This combination of conditions might lead to epidemics.

The Federal Republic of Somalia believes that the WHO should take a more active role in the prevention of further epidemics. A strong health care system is required to prevent any further epidemics. Somalia hopes to create

and strengthen ties to other countries in order to discuss further in detail about epidemics. Facilities should be opened to help train medical professionals and conduct research on several diseases. These facilities will be beneficial as they will work on improving health care and assist the research of pathogens that may harm populations outside Somalia.

Health workers should hold campaigns to educate people on the prevention of diseases. In addition to that, in-depth researches should be conducted by professionals to help understand the causes, early detection, control and treatment of the epidemics.