Highlights

- After more than 3 years with no cases of cholera reported in Haiti, on 2 October 2022, two positive cases in Cite Soleil were confirmed prompting the Health Authorities to declare an outbreak of Cholera. As of 6 October, 11 cases and 4 fatalities had been confirmed, and 152 suspected cases were undergoing investigation in various areas of Centre and Ouest departments.

- The cholera outbreak comes on the heels of major social unrest and gang-related violence gripping the country since 12 September, and severe fuel shortages restricting key utilities and the delivery of basic services including water networks and health services.

- UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Health (MoH), DINEPA (National Directorate for potable water and sanitation) and other partners to accelerate and scale up the emergency response, focused on rapid targeted response around cases and cases clusters through distribution of cholera kits, and social behavioural change.

- Access to some areas where cholera cases have been confirmed or suspected remains challenging due to insecurity, while the fuel crisis already complicates response efforts.
Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

After more than 3 years with no cases of cholera reported in Haiti, on 2 October 2022, two positive cases in Cite Soleil were confirmed prompting the Health Authorities to declare an outbreak of Cholera (Toxigenicity and genomics testing are pending). As of 6 October, 11 cases were confirmed, and more than 152 cases are undergoing investigation in various communes of Centre (Mirebalais) and Ouest (Cité Soleil, Croix des Bouquets, Delmas, Petion Ville, Port au Prince) departments.

The cholera outbreak comes on the heels of major social unrest and gang related violence gripping the country since 12 September, and severe fuel shortages restricting key utilities and the delivery of basic services including water networks and health services.

Access to areas where cholera cases have been confirmed or suspected remains challenging due to insecurity, while the fuel crisis already complicates response efforts.

Initial internal estimates forecast a projected caseload of 100 cases per day for the coming 3 months. Lack of water remains a major challenge with severe implications for the progression of the disease.

Given the blockage of the Varreux fuel terminal, fuel shortages are severely affecting key utilities, transportation and basic social services including water networks and health services. The United Nations and its humanitarian partners in Haiti called for a humanitarian corridor to facilitate the fuel distribution to respond the urgent needs of the population.

Coordination

The Government has officially announced the cholera outbreak and activated a Cholera Task Force with five dedicated Thematic Groups (e.g. Group 0: Coordination led by the Ministry of Health); Group 1 Epidemiology and surveillance of suspected cases led by the Ministry of Health Division of Epidemiological Research (DELR); Group 2: case management led by the Direction Sanitaire de l’Ouest (DSO); Group 3: WASH / IPC led by DINEPA and the Ministry of Health Division for Health Promotion and Environmental Protection (DPSPE); Group 4: vaccination led by the MoH National Vaccination programme Coordination Unit (UCNPP); Group 5: Community awareness and Communication led by the MoH Communication Coordination Unit UCP. The Government task force is designing a specific communication plan in response to Cholera. The UN will support the production and dissemination of the communication campaign with the budget available.

In addition to the task force set up by the government, the UN has established a Cholera specific communication taskforce (PAHO/WHO, UNICEF, OCHA and RCO) and activated the Access Working Group to launch a joint rapid response. More agencies will be included as the TF has a clearer outlook on messages approved from the Government and Health authorities. Priorities and tools were identified which will result in key communication to communities’ tools that will be used and developed (SMS campaign, social media cards, posters and printed materials, radio/audio spots, specific social media campaign with influencers), a daily monitoring of local news and social media.

The United Nations has called on all Haitian citizens to remain vigilant and take proactive measures to prevent the spread of the disease. Key UN inter-agency partners (WHO/PAHO; UNICEF) are actively engaging in the situation and working with the government to accelerate and scale up the emergency response, focused not only on limiting the spread of the disease, but also on informing the population on how to take immediate lifesaving action at the household level. Additional support will consist of expanded surveillance, increased water and sanitation provision, the development of cholera treatment centers and the reinforcement of case management. Specialized emergency response teams (NGO standby partners) are ready to be deployed to support affected communities.

Response Strategy and Priority Actions

UNICEF’s immediate response priorities include working with the MSPP and partners to size and execute an active surveillance component, with a linear list. To curb the transmission and protect against the disease from spreading we will have a rapid targeted response around cases and case clusters. In support of these actions, UNICEF is

(i) activating and collaborating with the health/sensitization teams for outreach/sensitization and distribution of Aquatabs/soaps distribution where possible; (ii) supporting local health structures by prepositioning/distributing Aquatabs, soap, ORS, leaflet with key messages so that the patients can go back to their families with hygiene kits; (iii) because the surveillance does not allow yet to identify clearly the individual cases, blanket distribution of hygiene kits at street level where most probable cases come from, (iv) a mapping of the actors and their operational capacities as well as the type of intervention by “section communale” or neighbourhood is ongoing; (v) chlorination of operating water networks and of water trucks when and where feasible. When surveillance will provide line listing of suspected cases and when security situation will allow, rapid response teams would be deployed on a case-by-case basis within 24H, as during 2010-2019 cholera response.
UNICEF pre-positioned contingency WASH stocks include 755,000 water purification tablets to serve 15,000 people for 15 days; 28,230 soap bars to serve 14,000 persons for one month; 20 bladders of 10 cubic metres, 10 bladders of 5 cubic metres have been made available to DINEPA. An order for 80 drums of 45kg of chlorine (High Test Hypochlorite (HTH) - has been placed to support DINEPA in chlorinating the water in Port au Prince, disinfecting affected households, and supplying health centres in affected areas.

The oral cholera vaccines (OCV) vaccination campaign is being discussed with the Ministry of Health, WHO and UNICEF whereby at least 500,000 people in the targeted areas will need to be reached – however discussions are still ongoing. The MoH, with the support of WHO/OMS and UNICEF will submit the application for vaccines through the International Coordinating Group on vaccination (ICG) – likely in two batches to accommodate the storage capacity of the National Center for the Supply of Essential Medicines (PROMESS). A costed vaccination campaign plan is being developed by MSPP, WHO/PAHO and UNICEF.

Sanitation/Solid waste: Solid waste removal and canal cleaning interventions initiated in Cite Soleil 6 weeks ago were suspended due to civil unrest over the last few weeks and are due to resume depending on access. HIMO not recommended in an epidemic context.

Funding overview

Considering a scenario of an average of over 100 cases / day, **UNICEF estimates that over US$22 million will be required for the immediate response**, to distribute cholera kits comprised of aquatabs, ORS (Oral Rehydration Serum) and soap bars; conduct significant Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)/social behavioural change activities, especially accompanying possible vaccination campaigns; provide safe water, solid waste removal and cleaning of rain water drainage channels to improve sanitation, prevent flooding in affected areas, and support to health structures.

UNICEF and partners are currently assessing existing stocks and response capacity on the ground – an order for close to US$100K worth of health supplies for the cholera response is being processed (including IEHK, AWD Kits and medicines). In addition, 32,000 gallons of diesel for a month of consumption for the Greater Port-au-Prince area water networks is required.

Funding requirements will be reassessed depending on the evolution of the situation and needs on the ground.

UNICEF Haiti: [https://www.unicef.org/haiti/](https://www.unicef.org/haiti/)


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