
Regional Cholera Platform For West and Central Africa Region

-Term of References 2021-

Introduction

The West and Central Africa Region (WCAR) is one of the regions most affected by cholera worldwide. In fact, between 2000 and 2015, 83% of reported deaths from cholera was in sub-Saharan areas (Lessler et al., 2018).

In order to ensure the effective coordination of all actors involved in cholera preparedness, prevention and response, a specific coordination unit called the "Regional Cholera platform" was created in 2012, with support of DG-ECHO following the cross-border outbreak in Guinea and Sierra Leone.

Between 2012 and 2020, the cholera platform had been working closely with t 24 countries in the West and Central African region by supporting research, country cholera factsheet development, facilitating cross-border and multi-sectorial coordination and collaboration, engaging countries towards cholera elimination, and supporting emergency response and preparedness.

In 2017, the Global Task Force on Cholera Control (GTFCC) launched an initiative titled *Ending Cholera: A Global Roadmap to 2030*, with the objective to reduce by 90 percent the number of deaths from cholera worldwide and to eliminate the disease in at least 20 countries by 2030.

The GTFCC has already opted to use the country support platforms to implement the global Roadmap in 12 countries in the world in the next 4 years. For 2020-2021 country support platforms will be operational in 4 countries around the world including 3 countries in Africa. These countries are not known yet.

In 2021, the WCAR cholera platform will work with 24 countries of the region by supporting: facilitation of cross-border coordination and collaboration in the four epidemiological basins, cholera emergency preparedness and response, valorisation of good practices, capacity building of partners, advocacy for long-term interventions in cholera hotspots areas and knowledge and information exchange and management.

In addition, WCAR cholera platform will coordinate and collaborate with GTFCC's country support platforms (CSP), namely in countries where CSP will be established in the region.

Objective The cholera platform's objective is to improve cholera outbreak preparedness, prevention and control across the West and Central Africa Region (WCAR) through the three main axes of work below:

- Axis 1: Improve cholera risk alert, early detection, preparedness and response to contain outbreaks.
- Axis 2: Improve prevention of disease occurrence by targeting multisectoral and long-term interventions in cholera hotspots.
- Axis 3: Improve knowledge exchange and information management at regional level.

Membership / leadership

The regional cholera platform is an operational arm of the regional actors that supports countries to implement cholera preparedness, prevention and control. The platform brings together key regional partners comprised of the relevant sectors in the region:

- WASH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene;
- Surveillance and reporting;
- Immunization with Oral Cholera Vaccine (OCV);
- Health Care System Strengthening;
- Community Engagement and Risk Communication; and
- Leadership and Coordination.

Different types of organizations can be members of the Regional Cholera Platform:

1. UN agencies (UNICEF, WHO, OCHA, IOM, etc....);
2. Humanitarian and Development NGOs;
3. Governmental organizations (mainly from Ministries of Planning, Health, WASH, Humanitarian actions, Civil protection) and intergovernmental organization (OCAL, ECOWAS, CEEAS, etc.);
4. Donor organizations; and
5. Academic partners and research institutions.

Governance and platform activities

At Global level:

The scope of the Regional Cholera Platform is for operational and coordination purposes (information and knowledge management, capacity building, country support, monitoring the long-term intervention in cholera hotspots areas, etc.).

The regional platform coordinates their actions with the global organizations like Global Task Force on Cholera Control (GTFCC), Global WASH Cluster (GWC), Others regional cholera platforms and Global Health Cluster (GHC).



The regional platform collaborates with some research centers (Johns Hopkins University, Assistance Publique Hopitaux de Paris, University of Venise, Institut Pasteur de Dakar, etc...).

The regional platform's strategy to prevent and control cholera is defined in line with cholera hotspot countries priorities and the Global Task Force for Cholera Control's global strategy and technical guidelines.

At Regional level:

The regional platform coordinates their actions with the regional countries, WASH and Health clusters or sectorial working groups and national cholera focal points. The focus of interest of the regional platform is country level cholera programs, with a special focus on cholera affected countries and cholera hotspots, according to the annual workplan.

The regional platform collaborates with West and Central African regional organization like Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and West African Health Organization (WAHO)

Secretariat of the platform: historically, UNICEF has been leading WCAR Cholera Platform Secretariat from Dakar with dedicated staff (Platform lead and Information Manager) and with WHO as co-lead (currently one dedicated staff). The Secretariat oversees the implementation of the regional workplan and supports countries.

Regional platform's members currently are composite as follows:

- One (1) representative of the Regional Health Working Group (WHO)
- One (1) representative of the Regional WASH Working Group (UNICEF)
- One (1) representative from OCHA
- Three (3) international medical organizations
- Three (3) international WASH organizations
- One (1) donor representative

The annual workplan is approved and suggested by Regional platform members as listed above.

At National level:

Communication and national support on Cholera from the regional level will be conducted through three main national cholera focal points from the Ministry of Health, WHO and UNICEF, and their alternate. These main national focal points must be strongly involved in the national Cholera Task Force, which should define the support required from the regional level and formally request it.

All actors receiving regional updates are considered members of the regional platform. They can participate in the strategic discussions of the main platform through web-conferences or workshops. They represent a few hundred members who have [registered on-line](#), with different backgrounds and from different organizations in all 24 countries of the UNICEF West and Central Africa Region.

Framework of the WCAR cholera platform:

Outcome 1: Improve early detection, preparedness and response to contain outbreaks		
Results	Activity	Partnership
R1.1: Key actors working on cholera are alerted of outbreak and risk of propagation	A.1.1.1 Alert technical and financial partners about any major regional outbreaks (monitoring of outbreak).	Countries to provide timely epidemiological data Clusters and Ministries to alert at national level.
	A.1.1.2 Reinforcement of surveillance including laboratory capacities including environmental surveillance	WHO, Ministries, Private sector
	A.1.1.3 Facilitate emergency coordination e-meeting between countries	Clusters in countries, GWC, UNICEF and WHO Country offices
R.1.2: Key actors have increased their capacity to respond efficiently and on a timely manner to cholera outbreak	A.1.2.1 Support countries to develop cholera contingency plans (scenario, stock, local capacity...) through training, technical support and review of plans	Ministries, Clusters members and OCHA in countries.
	A.1.2.2 Build capacity of technical partners at national or field level to respond to cholera outbreak (RRT for example)	GWC and GHC - GTFCC - National actors (cluster, OCHA and Ministries)
	A.1.2.3 Update the regional roster of experts that can be deployed in emergency or for technical consultancies	Provide list to GTFCC - Feedbacks from partners to complete list of experts
R 1.3: The cholera platform provides technical support to ongoing outbreaks	A.1.3.1 If requested by countries, organize joint mission for rapid evaluation, emergency response and support to coordination of the response	National actors (clusters' members, OCHA and Ministries) - Clusters
	A.1.3.2 Create regional contingency funds to kick-off the response to major outbreaks	UNICEF and WHO as leaders of the platform
Outcome 2: Prevent cholera occurrence by targeting multisectoral interventions in cholera hotspots		
Results	Activity	Partnership
R2.1: Multi-sectoral elimination plans of cholera are elaborated following evidence-based studies	A.2.1.1 If requested by countries, support them in the elaboration of multi-sectoral cholera control and elimination plans through remote support, in-country missions or workshops	Relevant Ministries at country level UNICEF and WHO Country offices
	A.2.1.2 Support countries in conducting multi-sectorial field assessments in hotspots (WASH, Health, C4D) to propose coherent and effective prevention programmes with estimated budget in hotspots areas	Relevant Ministries at country level UNICEF and WHO Country offices

R2.2: Decisions makers are informed about high-risk areas, long-term solutions and their costs	A.2.2.1 Advocacy to Technical and Financial partners to implement interventions in priority cholera hotspots	Technical and financial partners
	A.2.2.2 Represent and advocate for cholera in regional and national coordination bodies	Technical and financial partners -GTFCC, GWC, GHC - ECOWAS, ECCAS, AU, WAHO
	A.2.2.3 Monitor and communicate success-stories on “cholera control” in the region	Relevant Ministries at country level - Communication experts
Outcome 3: Improve Knowledge, Information management and exchange mechanisms		
Results	Activities	Partnership
R 3.1: Regional disaggregated cholera information is gathered, disseminated and available to platform’s members	A.3.1.1 Manage regional platform website (studies, lessons learnt, good practices, maps and infographics...)	Platform partners to provide information, updates, latest news - Work closely with other regional platforms
	A.3.1.2 Organize webinars to communicate to platform members on existing strategy, tools, progress, good practices, etc.	Platform members - Possibly joint webinars with key partners according to topic Countries to provide timely epidemiological data (MoH, WHO).
	A.3.1.3 Publish regional cholera updates through monthly bulletins	OCHA region, WASH and Health cluster at country level to forward widely
	A.3.1.4 Assess notoriety of the cholera platform, its services and tools through surveys, consultations or website traffic	Platform members
	A.3.1.5 Collect, map and share information on all stock of cholera vaccine in the region	WHO, UNICEF, Countries MoH, NGOs
	A.3.1.6 Collect, map and share all cholera research on-going in the region	
R 3.2: Partnerships and cross-border collaboration are reinforced	A.3.2.1 Organize coordination meetings with main regional platform members to: 1) update on the cholera situation in the region; 2) update on the latest events / news / research 3); define priorities and the platform workplan	Main regional platform body (please refer to list of participants) Possibility to participate remotely through conference call
	A.3.2.2 Reinforce cross-border coordination and collaboration through workshop to elaborate coherent approach at epidemiological basin level	Regional organisation (ECAAS, ECOWAS...) Countries with Ministries Platform members

	A.3.2.3 Strengthen partnership to link-up platform within existing coordination bodies	National clusters, GTFCC, GWC, UNICEF, WHO...
	A.3.2.4 Platform lead or volunteer platform members to participate in technical working group of GTFCC meetings to represent the platform	Platform members and/or platform lead
	A.3.2.5 Initiate coordination and collaboration with country support platforms (CSP)	CSP, OMS, GTFCC and WCAR cholera platform