

WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

Antananarivo 02 November 2017

Purpose: ABOUT PLAGUE EPIDEMIC IN MADAGASCAR

Dear Colleagues,

In conformity with the leading role of WHO within the United Nations system in the implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005), I would like to share with you the following point on the current situation of the plague epidemic in Madagascar.

As a reminder, the purpose and scope of the International Health Regulations (2005) is to prevent the spread of disease while avoiding creating unnecessary barriers to international trade and commerce. To this end, WHO continuously monitors the progress of response operations in order to provide actors and other stakeholders with relevant information required for the implementation of effective interventions.

I would like to express, on behalf of the World Health Organization, my sincere thanks to all partners for the efforts they have made for the rapid control of the plague epidemic in Madagascar. Our joint efforts with the national authorities are beginning to bear fruit, as shown by the significant reduction in the number of reported cases, the number of deaths, the number of patients hospitalized and the number of persons requiring a follow-up.

Some epidemiological data can be used to assess the work done since the notification of this epidemic to WHO in accordance with the requirements of the International Health Regulations (2005).

The number of new cases and deaths reported has declined substantially from 238 cases and 12 deaths in week 43 (as of October 29, 2017) to 41 new suspected cases and 3 deaths during week 44 (as of November 5, 2017), a reduction of 83% in the number of cases and 75% in the number of deaths during these last 2 weeks.

The number of confirmed cases of pulmonary plague also decreased significantly, from 19 confirmed cases in week 43 to zero cases in week 44. In terms of affected districts, out of the 51 districts reporting at least a suspected, probable or confirmed case of plague, 27 districts have no longer reported cases for at least two weeks, reflecting then the control of the epidemic in these districts. The 24 remaining districts benefit from close monitoring carried out by the Ministry of Public Health with the support of the partners.

Finally, the number of hospitalized plague patients has also dropped significantly, from 106 (29 October 2017) to 17 (04 November 2017).

Despite the progress achieved, continued vigilance is needed and the continuation of response activities remains a priority in order to control definitively the epidemic, prevent the occurrence of new cases and deaths, and minimize the negative impact of the epidemic on the population and on various economic sectors of the country. Our joint actions will have to continue until the end of the plague season scheduled for April 2018.

I cannot conclude my remarks without thanking all technical and financial partners involved in the response to the epidemic for support in the areas of laboratory analysis, case management, social mobilization, community engagement; they brought excellent support to the Ministry of Public Health.

In particular, we would like to thank the Minister of Public Health for the excellent cooperation he has played, which has helped to improve the situation with regard to the epidemic.

WHO remains keen to provide further information on this epidemic.

Please accept, dear colleagues, the expression of my highest consideration.

Pr Charlotte Faty NDIAYE
WHO Resident Representative