Dear Partners,  

Coordination of medical donations to the Gaza Strip

Since the beginning of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, there has been an overwhelming expression of solidarity and willingness to help the ordinary people of Gaza from across the region and the world. This has resulted in a particularly generous and rapid response to the needs of the health sector by Member States, organizations and individuals. Very substantial donations of drugs and supplies have reached Gaza via Egypt (Rafah), Amman and Tel Aviv, and further large volumes are in the pipeline waiting to go in. The Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH) has also responded to the crisis by delivering urgently needed supplies from its warehouse in Ramallah.

There is a risk that further donations could overwhelm the systems in Gaza and result in duplication and waste if they are not properly coordinated. While we welcome the continuation of this regional and global spirit of solidarity, we urge the international community to plan, coordinate and deliver its health assistance in consultation with WHO. The Health Cluster, led by WHO, has been rolled out in occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). Health cluster partners are meeting regularly and working closely with the Palestinian MoH. The MoH, with WHO support, has set up an emergency operations room in Ramallah to identify and regularly update the needs of the health sector in Gaza for medical drugs, supplies, equipment and human resources.

In a similar vein, a number of medical teams and individual medical staff have entered Gaza, mainly through Rafah, where they are providing support to the severely stretched hospitals. This support also needs to be planned and coordinated so that it meets the specific needs of each hospital, and to ensure that the teams can be accommodated and integrated with the staff on the ground.
I kindly appeal to you to coordinate all your support to the health needs of the people of Gaza with WHO:

1. WHO Country Office in Jerusalem: Fred Urlep, urlep@who.int, +972 54 717 9033
2. WHO Regional Office in Cairo: Altaf Musani, musania@emro.who.int, +20 2 22765025
3. WHO Headquarters in Geneva: Jon Carver, carverj@who.int, +41 22 971 2653.

Please do not hesitate to contact our Office in Jerusalem for any immediate advice: Tel: +972 2540 0595, Fax: +972 5461 79010, email: info@who-health.org and feel free to visit our website for further information: http://www.who.int/hac/crises/international/wbgs/en/index.html. In regard to drug donations, please consult our guidelines on drug donations: http://www.who.int/hac/techguidance/guidelines_for_drug_donations.pdf.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Eric Laroche
Assistant Director-General
Health Action in Crises