5 February 2015 - The eighth meeting of the Emergency Committee (EC) convened by the Director-General under the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005) regarding the **Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)** was conducted with members and advisors of the Emergency Committee by teleconference on 4 February 2015, from 1200 to 1500 Central European Time.

The WHO Secretariat provided an update on and assessment of epidemiological and scientific developments, including a description of recent cases and transmission patterns. The following countries provided an update on and assessment of MERS-CoV in their countries: Austria, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey.

The Committee noted that MERS-CoV cases continue to occur. The epidemiological pattern continues to be characterized by sporadic cases and clusters of cases in communities and in healthcare settings, mostly in Saudi Arabia, and with no evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission. A small number of exported cases have been reported in travellers. There were no reported cases related to the Hajj.

The Committee further noted that although significant efforts have been made to strengthen infection prevention and control measures, transmission in healthcare settings is still occurring.

The Committee emphasized that although the pattern of transmission appears relatively unchanged, the overall situation and the possibility of international spread remains of concern. In addition, increased surveillance in many countries is needed to better monitor trends related to the spread of this virus. Additional information from studies is also required to better understand the risk factors for infection and transmission. In particular, the results of case-control studies from affected countries are urgently needed.

The Committee reiterated that its previous advice remains relevant, and that affected countries should:

- monitor carefully the evolution of MERS-CoV infection, reinforcing epidemiological surveillance in camels, as well as surveillance in humans and addressing critical gaps in knowledge of human and animal transmission;
- continue to strengthen efforts to implement basic infection prevention and control measures, and increase education on these measures, especially among healthcare workers;

- continue to enhance awareness through effective risk communication concerning MERS-CoV to the general public, health professionals, and policy makers;
- strengthen intersectoral collaboration and joint activities between animal and human health sectors;
- share with WHO all relevant information needed to assess and manage MERS, in a timely manner, as required by the International Health Regulations (2005).

The Committee unanimously concluded that the conditions for a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) have not been met.

Based on the Committee's advice and information currently available, the Director-General accepted the Committee's assessment. She thanked the Committee for its work.

WHO will continue to provide updates to the Committee Members and Advisors. The Emergency Committee will be reconvened should circumstances require.