Sana'a, 22 September 2015 — WHO is delivering extensive health support in response to the crisis in Yemen, providing almost 200 tonnes of critical medical supplies and more than 745 000 litres of fuel to keep health services operational amidst intensifying fighting.

Yemen's 6-month conflict has left thousands of people in need of treatment, caused extensive damage to health facilities, and fanned a dengue fever outbreak. WHO warns that the numbers of people needing health care are likely to increase. Numerous health facilities are on the verge of collapsing under the weight of the conflict.

"The situation is alarming," says Dr Ahmed Shadoul, WHO Representative for Yemen. " The health crisis is deepening as more health facilities run out of basic supplies and more hospitals and blood-transfusion centres stop functioning. Health facilities are operating at minimum capacity. These supplies are a crucial lifeline. Without support, many hospitals would close down preventing millions of people from accessing health."

The medicines that WHO has provided since early September include those used in supportive treatment for dengue fever; since March, more than 1600 cases of dengue fever have been reported in Taiz governorate.

To mitigate the spread of dengue, WHO, in coordination with national health authorities, successfully conducted indoor spraying to disrupt breeding grounds, despite reduced access in Taiz governorate. Heavy rains, stagnant rain water has resulted in increasing breeding sites for the mosquitos transmitting dengue. WHO is partnering with other organizations and local health authorities to distribute insecticide-treated mosquito nets, educate families on the causes of the diseases, conduct indoor spraying to disrupt breeding grounds and secure necessary laboratory supplies for medical facilities.

Amid increasing casualty numbers, WHO has supported 3 surgery sections in Zaid Hospital, Sana'a, with trauma and surgical kits. WHO continues to support 10 nutrition mobile clinics in Aden, Lahj, Hadramout and Hodeida governorates to diagnose and treat children aged 6 months to 5 years.

As part of keeping routine primary health care services functional, WHO and partners launched last Saturday a second round of integrated outreach activities, including immunization services, integrated management of childhood illness, reproductive health and nutrition services, and treatment of conditions such as raised blood pressure and the common cold. More than 300 000 children under aged under one year are expected to be reached.

“These tasks are not easily accomplished in the midst of relentless violence. We need protection and safety for all people working to provide health care,” adds Dr Ahmed Shadoul.

As of 17 September, there have been 5039 deaths and 25 653 injuries reported by health facilities.