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# Building Health Sector Capacity for El Nino Preparedness and Response-Reflections from Africa

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28 February 2017

# Public Health Emergencies in AFRO Region

- ❑ 100 events on annual basis in average
- ❑ 75 to 90 % of events are infectious diseases related, including emerging threats such as dengue, Zika, and HVF (Marburg, Lassa, RVF) and other outbreak prone diseases such as Yellow Fever.
- ❑ There is need to strengthen climate preparedness for DRM-H in almost all countries of the AFRO region
- ❑ Climate changes play a role in emerging diseases by altering the geographic range and seasonality of certain infectious diseases

# PHEs threaten public health security

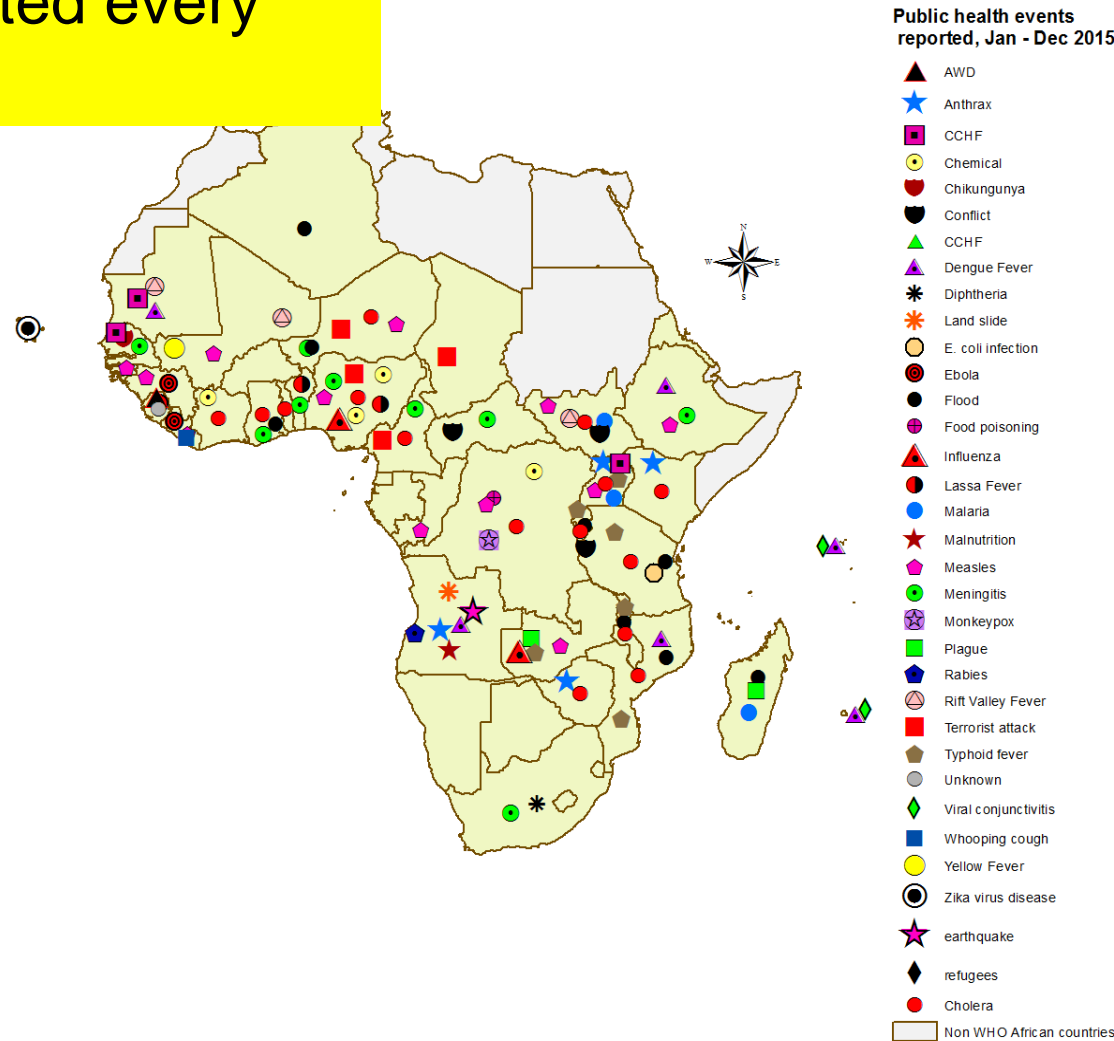
100 PHEs in average reported every year in AFRO region

78%: Infectious diseases

23% of the infectious events = CHOLERA

17%: Climate related

5%: Others



# WHO El Niño and Health Global Overview 2016

## EL NIÑO EFFECTS AND HEALTH CONSEQUENCES



**Impacts of the 2015/2016 El Nino highlighted the urgency and need to better understand and prepare for climate sensitive health risks, and the role climate services can play in developing this capacity.**

# Recommended Preparedness and Response Actions

## 1 Assess and monitor how El Niño can alter health risks in your area

- Establish and maintain dialogue with national meteorological and hydrological services (NMHS) and other key actors, such as the national disaster management agency.
- Monitor seasonal forecasts, real-time conditions, local rainfall and temperature forecasts.
- Monitor incidence of infectious diseases and other potential health effects.
- Conduct a health risk assessment in potentially affected areas.

## 2 Develop strategies and activate emergency preparedness and response measures

- Review and develop plans for preparedness and response for the health sector, taking into account direct consequences of climate-related hazards on health, including in on-going emergencies (e.g. displacement and refugee situations).
- In line with the plan for preparedness and response, put in place adequate operational capacities, including human resources, supplies (e.g. replenishment and pre-positioning of insecticide-treated bed-nets, essential drugs and medical supplies, etc.), and communications equipment.

## 3 Develop effective communication strategies with NMHS and other partners

- Establish clear and consistent messages to keep the public and health sector response agencies informed about climate hazards and their health risks.
- Strengthen knowledge and information management mechanisms to account for El Niño health consequences.
- Raise awareness and advocate to partners, relevant Ministries and donors, to mobilise necessary resources, as needed.

# Gaps in climate services

- Lack of coordination between health and climate services
- Gaps in health specific products (eg climate and cholera)
- Lack of location specific information
- Few Member States in the Region have capacity in DRM-H let alone use of climate services
- The multi-sectoral coordination for DRM-H, climate related risk is unfortunately left solely to MOH in most Member States.

# Call for Paradigm Shift in the Health Sector

From Hazard-based.....



To RISK-BASED PLANNING





# Some services to improve DRM

- **Health Specific climate products** -risk-based planning in the existing policies, for paradigm shift from management of diseases/outbreaks to management of risks
- **Multi-sectoral coordination in generating products** in order to prevent and manage the risk of emerging and climate related diseases
- **Research and Capacity of health professionals** to conduct vulnerability and risk analysis, and use tailored climate products and services to support disease surveillance and emergency preparedness is enhanced