

## Oshana Region active-case search & surveillance concludes

*WHO Namibia:* Rapid notification of disease outbreaks and disease surveillance are essential for prompt public health action and for monitoring disease trends. To this end, the World Health Organization (WHO) along with the Epidemiology Division (national level) within the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) conducted the active-case search mission to Oshana Region from 21-25 August 2017.

The meetings aimed to identify gaps requiring capacity building in preventing and reporting disease outbreaks among health care workers in Oshana Region. About seven health centres (including a private hospital) in the region were visited.

The mission, which covers support supervision, orientation on Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR)

guidelines and actively searching for cases within hospitals, had already been conducted in other regions. Namibia, as a country with a functional surveillance system, is expected to use IDSR. For effective IDSR, all health care workers involvement is required. Further, Namibia has a responsibility to build healthcare systems that are strong and that work to identify and contain diseases before they spread. This requires trained staff, adequate transport and other logistics for efficiency and effectiveness.

The active-case search and surveillance are crucial especially in view of sustaining and maintaining the surveillance indicators for the eradication of polio, measles, acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) and other vaccine preventable diseases.

The influence of clinicians in outbreak containment cannot be overrated as they are the mainstay of passive outbreak surveillance systems since they are usually the first contact a patient has with the healthcare system. They find themselves identifying the presence of infectious diseases, cases, tracking and notifying designated public health authorities. Workshops conducted by both WHO and national surveillance officers in the past have often neglected the clinicians. For this reason, the mission included a clinician sensitization component. Thus, two clinician sensitization sessions were held in Oshakati and Ongwediva. The clinician sensitization will improve the level of knowledge of clinicians and communication channels which will, in the long run, improve disease surveillance and notification.

### **SDG 3 'Good Health and Well-being'**



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