



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

# NOTE FOR THE PRESS

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Note for the Media WHO/19  
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## W.H.O. ADVISES ON THE RIGHT DRUG DONATIONS FOR LEBANON

**Geneva** - The World Health Organization (WHO) warns that while medicines are essential to alleviate suffering and are a core element in the international relief efforts for Lebanon, inappropriate donations may cause more harm than good.

The Lebanese Ministry of Health and non-governmental organizations have asked for medicines and supplies for chronic conditions and surgical interventions. Some of these can be purchased locally, but international donations are also needed in order to restock rapidly dwindling supplies.

So far, many of the donations have been exactly what was needed. However, Dr Ala Alwan, Representative of the WHO Director-General for Health Action in Crises, says expired medicines, those ready to expire, partially used medicines, free samples, products of uncertain quality, and poorly labelled donations waste valuable resources.

"Lebanon needs medicines, but it needs the right kind. Every box of medicines or other supplies donated has to be checked, sorted, stored and shipped to the right places," said Dr Alwan. "People need the right medicines quickly. We cannot afford to spend precious time sorting out the good from those of poor quality," he added.

WHO is assisting in the management of the central warehouse in Beirut and has helped to identify pharmacists to better respond to the needs and manage the donations.

WHO is helping to make it easier for donors to know exactly what is requested. The Organization has posted a list of needed medicines and medical supplies, which will be updated regularly: [http://www.emro.who.int/eha/lebanon\\_supplies.htm](http://www.emro.who.int/eha/lebanon_supplies.htm).

Donors are also invited to consult the *WHO Guidelines for Drug Donations* that are posted at [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/1999/WHO\\_EDM\\_PAR\\_99.4.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/1999/WHO_EDM_PAR_99.4.pdf) before sending any donations.

WHO advises potential donors to contact the national health authorities to be updated on the latest needs, and to notify Lebanon of their donation to allow the country to plan for their receipt and use. Prospective donors may also contact WHO for technical advice.

## **Note for the Media WHO/19**

### **Page 2**

WHO requests that donors purchase medicines from sources with reliable quality control that comply with international standards for packaging, labelling and other key quality requirements.

Use of expired drugs can be dangerous for patients' health. WHO recommends that donated drugs and medicines should have at least one year's shelf-life remaining. Labelling and instructions for the use of the drugs must be in a language that is understood in Lebanon.

The costs of international and local transport, warehousing, port clearance and storage should be met by the donor. To facilitate entry procedure, donors should present comprehensive and fully accurate paperwork which includes a detailed packing list, specifies the goods' contents, dosage, form, quantity, expiry date, volume and weight.

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**For more information on the WHO's activities related to the Middle-East crisis, please consult:**

[http://www.who.int/hac/crises/international/middle\\_east/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/hac/crises/international/middle_east/en/index.html)

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