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AFRICA/BURUNDI - Cholera continues to spread, to hold it back a campaign on the use of drinking water and lavatories would be sufficient

Bujumbura (Agenzia Fides) - Health officials in Burundi are trying to contain an epidemic of cholera which, since August, has killed 12 people and has infected more than 600. Although the epidemic is under control, in some areas of the country, in a new area in Nyanza Lac, Makamba province, there have been 80 new cases, among these 64 people have been hospitalized. The cases are many because the pandemic broke out suddenly and, compared to others, the area was not prepared. The outbreak started on August 5 in the southern town of Rumonge, Bururi province, which is a subject area because the residents often use undrinkable water of Lake Tanganyika. Since then the disease has rapidly spread to other places, including the capital, Bujumbura and the provinces of Bujumbura Rurale, Bubanza, Cibitoke and Makamba. Several health care centers with emergency kits have been set up, including disinfectants, tents and kits for hydration. In addition, the Burundi Red Cross is distributing drinking water to families in need. 60 thousand liters per day have already been distributed in areas of Bujumbura Rurale and Bujumbura, and now they are providing to intervene even in Nyanza Lac.
The organization which manages the water and electricity in the country has started to ration water in the suburbs of Bujumbura to ensure it to areas on the outskirts of the city, particularly those suffering from cholera. Because of an energy crisis in the capital, the organization is unable to provide water to all suburbs of the city at the same time. However, efforts to contain the epidemic continue and the Red Cross will begin distributing medical kits, including cans, soap and buckets. Cholera is quite recurrent in the south of the country and in the suburbs of the capital because of lack of clean water and lavatories. To control the epidemic hygiene awareness is essential. Changing habits would be essential, if water were treated and public awareness campaign were carried out to the entire population on the use of lavatories, the problem would be reduced. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 15/09/2011)

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