



## PRESS RELEASE

### **UNMEER CONGRATULATES MALI FOR STEMMING EBOLA EPIDEMIC, URGES VIGILANCE**

Bamako, January 22, 2015 – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, commended Mali for stemming the Ebola outbreak and urged it to remain vigilant as the neighbouring countries continue to record new cases.

On 18 January, the UN and Mali officially declared an end to the epidemic in Mali after a period of 42 days without a new case. In total, eight people were infected in the country, six of whom died, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

“We came with a message of congratulations. We came to say bravo, but remain vigilant,” he said during a meeting with Prime Minister Modibo Keita, adding that the success of Mali was thanks to national leadership and the efforts of the UN and other international partners.

Ould Cheikh Ahmed arrived in Bamako on Wednesday, bringing a message from the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. He examined preparations for the possible emergence of new Ebola cases, given the still high number of infections in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, even though the trend is reversing. 145 cases were confirmed last week of a total of 900 cases during the past month. Around fifty communities are affected in the three countries.

The Head of UNMEER is worried about the fact that many new cases are recorded, which did not originate from the list of known contacts of Ebola patients, which indicates reluctance on the part of some people to report their proximity to people infected with Ebola.

Ould Cheikh Ahmed, accompanied by Dr. Bruce Aylward, WHO Assistant Director-General, also emphasized the need to strengthen cross-border surveillance: “People, communities do not recognize the border, and therefore the next challenge for Mali – as indeed for Senegal or Nigeria, who also managed to isolate the few cases that came – is to remain vigilant. We are not immune to new cases here and there, until we have zero cases throughout West Africa.”

Ould Cheikh Ahmed also said that we must “rebuild health care systems” and “turn this crisis into an opportunity” to provide the affected countries with healthcare infrastructure capable of managing possible cases of Ebola after this crisis.

Ould Cheikh Ahmed arrived from Freetown, Sierra Leone, where he was present for the reception of 262 vehicles and telecommunications equipment, which was carried by a Danish ship and will be used in the fight against Ebola. He returns tonight to Accra, where UNMEER headquarters are located.

Since the beginning of the epidemic, there were 21,724 confirmed, probable, and suspected cases of Ebola, including 8,641 deaths, mainly in the three countries.

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For more information:

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