

Concept Note
International Ebola Recovery Conference
10 July 2015
New York

I. Background

Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone have undertaken a remarkable effort to fight the devastating Ebola Virus (EVD) epidemic, with the support of the international community. We are now seeing a significant decline in the number of new cases in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. However, there can be no complacency before we get to zero. Much more needs to be done.

As the Governments of the three affected countries have stated, recovery needs to be pursued now alongside, and as part of the goal of, “getting to zero and staying at zero”. To address this, while maintaining a sharp focus on the need to reach zero cases in all affected countries, the overall perspective is progressively changing from a situation of an emergency operation toward one of multi-faceted long-term support. In order to bring an end to the crisis, recovery efforts must go beyond redressing direct development losses and build back better and stronger to ensure greater resilience to similar shocks. In the same manner as the international response to the emergency phase of the outbreak and the resources invested in the response helped save lives, investment in building resilience and in recovery may help prevent loss of lives in the future.

The Ebola Recovery Assessment (ERA), led by the United Nations in partnership with the World Bank, European Union and African Development Bank, identified what it will take to ‘get to zero’ and what elements are required for immediate recovery. More importantly, the ERA identified from the preventative standpoint, the factors that increased vulnerability of the three countries to the Ebola crisis in the first instance. This includes the drivers of institutional and societal fragility, as well as the conditions necessary to minimize the risk of its resurgence. On this basis the Governments of the affected countries have developed national recovery plans, in addition to the regional Mano River Union (MRU) recovery plan, which will all require significant international support. The Governments, as well as the United Nations, are seriously concerned that attention to recovery will fade as infection rates drop to zero and Ebola ceases to be an immediate emergency.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has decided to host an international conference on Ebola recovery on 10 July 2015 in cooperation with the Governments of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone and with the support of the African Development Bank, the African Union, the European Union and the World Bank. The purpose of this conference will be to focus international attention specifically on the need for targeted investments for the three countries to support recovery priorities over a 24 month timeframe to enable countries to make the transition to recovery. The funding requirements of three countries presented at the conference will take into account the

imperatives to build back effective, inclusive and resilient institutions and decentralized services. This entails consideration of the broader risk landscape, including health, governance and conflict risks within the three countries, the Mano River sub-region and the West Africa region as a whole. This conference will not be focused on the funding requirements of the United Nations system to support recovery.

A number of events have highlighted the need to begin the recovery efforts, including meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission in August and November 2104 and January and April 2015, the ECOSOC special meeting on the 5th of December 2014 and the Partnership Forum on the 28th of May 2015, the Brussels conference on 3 March 2015 which focused on clarifying the principles and priorities of recovery support and the World Bank Spring Meetings in April 2015, at which the three countries presented their national recovery strategies and a joint recovery strategy. The International Ebola Recovery Conference will be part of this “continuum”. Following the Spring Meetings, i) country strategies have been further fine-tuned and translated into costed programmes; ii) implementation, coordination and financing mechanisms are being designed; and iii) transparency and mutual accountability frameworks are being established between the Governments and the population and between the countries and international partners.

II. Conference objectives and scope

The international conference will offer an opportunity for the governments of the three affected countries as well as the MRU to: i) share detailed country and regional EVD strategies, addressing their individual requirements for getting to zero, staying at zero as well as their recovery plans and resource needs, with priorities for the immediate 24-month period; ii) commit to a global partnership for Ebola recovery in line with the New Deal principles in the recovery efforts; and iii) secure pledges of international support to fill technical and financial gaps in resources needed by the three countries to ensure timely and efficient implementation of the recovery strategies for the 24-month period.

III. Conference Fact Sheet

Title: International Ebola Recovery Conference, hosted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in cooperation with the Governments of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and in partnership with the African Union, the African Development Bank, the European Union and the World Bank

Format / duration: A one-day high-level meeting to be preceded by a one-day technical consultation.

Location: New York

Date: 10 July (Technical consultation on 09 July)

Participation:

- United Nations Secretary-General (host)
- Heads of State of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, accompanied by the relevant senior government Ministers and officials
- Chairperson of the African Union
- Ministers of United Nations Member States
- President of the Economic and Social Council
- President of the General Assembly
- Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission
- High-level representatives of the African Union, the European Union, the African Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank and the World Bank
- High-level representation of regional organizations (e.g. Mano River Union, the Economic Community of West African States)
- UNDP Administrator
- Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Ebola
- Executive Heads of United Nations entities
- Representatives of the private sector
- Representatives of private foundations
- Representatives of civil society organizations

Conference Working Documents:

National EVD recovery strategy documents for Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, regional EVD recovery strategy document from the Mano River Union

IV. Expected Outcomes

- Reaffirmation of international support to the affected countries and region, reflected in final communique
- Concrete financial commitments to support national and regional recovery strategies within an 24-month timeframe
- Agreement on a mutual accountability framework based on the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, and an agreed funding mechanism for recovery

V. Related events

- *Peacebuilding Commission meetings* that focused on the potential impact of Ebola on security, local governance, political institutions and social cohesion (18 August and 3 November 2014, 26 January and 14 April 2015)
- *ECOSOC Special Meeting “Ebola: A Threat to Sustainable Development”* focused on linking emergency Ebola response in West Africa to longer-term efforts to strengthen health systems (5 December 2014)
- *European Union Brussels conference “From Emergency Response to Recovery”* focused on clarifying the principles and priorities of recovery support (3 March 2015)
- *World Bank event “High-level Meeting on Ebola: The Road to Recovery”* where national recovery plans/strategies will be presented and discussion will take place on the “fiscal space” that can be found (through debt reduction/relief programmes. In order to ensure that expectations are realistic, available resources for Ebola recovery (both domestic and external) will be mapped to make recommendations on how they may be reallocated for the recovery agenda and to determine additional resources needed for effective and sustained recovery (17 April 2015)
- *ECOSOC Partnerships Dialogue “Partnerships in support of strengthening health systems: Building resilience to pandemics”* (28 May 2015)
- *ECOSOC Transition Event on “Supporting the transition from relief to development: Promoting recovery and resilience”*(17 June 2015)
- *African Union International Conference on Africa’s Fight Against Ebola in Malabo* (20-21 July 2015)