

FRANCE

**Professor Jean-François Delfraissy,
Interministerial coordinator of the fight against Ebola
(English translation)**

Ladies and gentlemen,

May I first of all say that it is a real pleasure to be here today, at the request and invitation of the Secretary-General.

I would like to stress the fact that, although the impact of the virus has been lessened thanks to the fantastic work of the national and international teams on the ground, it has not yet been eradicated: both Guinea and Sierra Leone have recurrent Ebola cases on the border regions, which highlights the ease with which the virus can spread. Liberia has recently uncovered new cases despite having been Ebola-free for a very long time. The point I wish to make is that the epidemic is far from over – at a time when we are all gathered here to discuss the financial implications for future projects, we must remember that the immediate objective remains the eradication of the virus in all three countries.

We must use Ebola as an opportunity to rethink our approach towards transition and reconstruction – it cannot be simply a question of money. Ebola must be a wake-up call in our management of the reconstruction efforts so as to not fall into the trap of the past. Transparency, good governance and flexibility must be the key words and take prime position in the minds of all, both at a donor and decision-making level, but also from the point of view of the partners and recipients. I know that many of my esteemed colleagues from various countries share this view.

I would like to thank the three countries, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone for their revised reconstruction plans. Their efforts to identify key sectors are greatly appreciated. It is important that the projects are prioritized in time so as to be able to strengthen and even rebuild the damaged infrastructures in a structured, logical and visible way.

As France has been in the front-line in the emergency response to the epidemic in 2014, so too shall France be committed to playing its part in the longer-term reconstruction and surveillance of potential diseases. In that light, France has mobilized over 150 million euros to add to the reconstruction efforts (be it through the cancelling of debt, public health projects on a national and west-African scale and indeed contributions to international funds). We have already started our programs with our African and international partners.

With regards to the UNDP fund, it is our firm belief that such a fund is a welcome tool in our future fight against Ebola and its long lasting effects. The proposed structure will ensure that all concerned parties, donor countries, involved NGOs and recipients will partake in the allocation of funds and I have no doubt that the lessons learned from the past will encourage speedy decision-making and action.

Dans le souci de tirer toutes les leçons possibles de cette épidémie, la France compte organiser, à l'automne (le 29 octobre), un retour d'expérience avec la participation des acteurs impliqués dans la réponse.

On behalf of the French authorities, I thank you for your attention and for your continued efforts in combating this deadly epidemic.