

This is a situation report by the Interagency Collaboration on Ebola replacing situation reports previously produced by UNMEER. The report is produced by OCHA Regional Office for West and Central Africa in collaboration with WHO and humanitarian partners. It covers the period from 7 to 20 September 2015. The next report will be issued on or around 6 October.

Highlights

- In Guinea on 14-15 September, the National Coordinator and the Ebola Crisis Manager led an inter-agency cross-border mission to Sierra Leone to meet with counterparts and share lessons-learned on Guinea's approach to quarantine and Ebola vaccination trials.
- WHO has recently issued guidance on Ebola virus disease during pregnancy, including screening and management of Ebola cases, contacts and survivors.
- To increase demand for family planning in the context of Ebola, the Ministry of Health and Sanitation in Sierra Leone, with the support of UNFPA, launched Sierra Leone's first National Family Planning Demand Generation Campaign with the theme: 'Children by Choice, not by Chance' on 8 September. The aim of the month long campaign is to improve reproductive health and increase uptake of family planning services.

Epidemiological status

- In the week of 7 to 13 September (week 37), five new cases of Ebola virus disease (EVD) were reported in Sierra Leone, one of which a 16-year-old girl in a village in the chiefdom of Bombali Seborá, several kilometers from the Bombali district capital Makeni. At present the origin of infection is unknown. The last reported case from Bombali was over five months ago.
- As of 19 September over 700 contacts are under follow-up in Bombali. The response team that dealt with the Tonkolili cluster has been deployed with additional support. The plan is to quarantine the village and vaccinate if possible, although vaccination resources are stretched.
- The other four cases were among high-risk contacts in Sella Kafta, Tonko Limba chiefdom, Kambia. Available genome sequencing data of the cluster of cases is not sufficiently robust to support any conclusion about the origin of infection of the first-reported case. Further sequencing is underway.
- No new cases were reported in Guinea in week 37, but in week 38 (14 to 20 September) two new cases were reported (data as of 19 September). One case is a 10-year old girl who developed symptoms in the Ratoma area of Conakry and then traveled to Forecariah, where she died. The second case is a 24-year old female from the Dixinn area of Conakry. For both cases a possible link with a probable case is being investigated. More than 500 contacts are under follow-up in Guinea.
- As of 19 September, no new cases were reported from Sierra Leone for week 38.
- No new cases were reported from Liberia since it was declared free of Ebola virus transmission on 3 September by the Ministry of Health and WHO. It is now 64 days since symptom onset of the last reported confirmed case.

Phase 3 response: a final framework for getting to zero

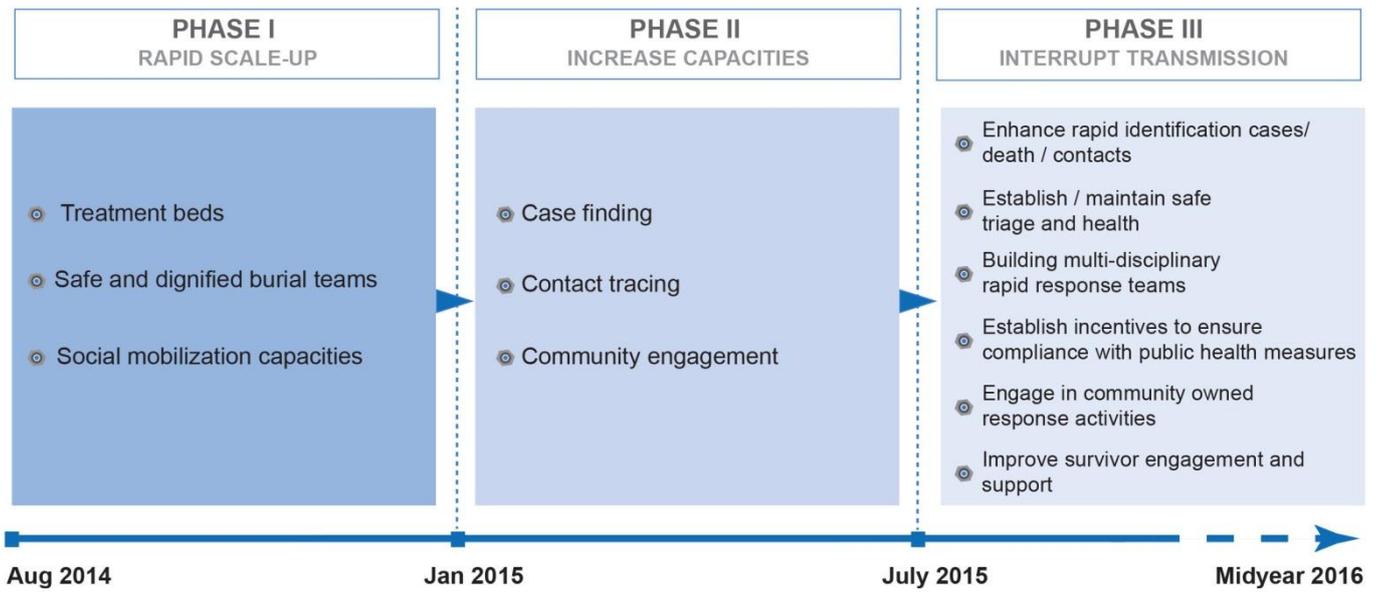
The Interagency Collaboration on Ebola is now in Phase 3 of the response. This phase is expected to run into mid-2016.

During Phase 1, the focus was on the rapid and successful scale-up of treatment beds, safe and dignified burial teams, and social mobilization capacities. In Phase 2, emphasis was placed on increasing capacities for case finding, contact tracing, and community engagement. For Phase 3, there are two objectives: first, to define and

rapidly interrupt all remaining chains of transmission and, second, to identify and manage risks in all locations that were previously affected.

Within these objectives, there are several priorities including: enhancing the rapid identification of live cases, deaths, and contacts; establishing and maintaining safe triage and health facilities; building multi-disciplinary rapid response teams at regional and zone levels in all three countries; providing incentives for individuals and communities to comply with public health measures; engaging in chieftain-led, community-owned local response activities; and improving survivor engagement and support.

The response to Ebola virus disease in West Africa



In **Guinea**, UN, NGOs and the Red Cross Movement have finalized their joint planning for Phase 3 of the response, which entails ensuring that ongoing efforts to get to zero remain in place, while also aiming to minimize risks for further infections by reinforcing surveillance systems and ensuring care for Ebola survivors.

As part of Phase 3, **Sierra Leone** is actively trying to break all transmission chains and has achieved this in most districts. Recent cases in Kambia and Bombali have been quickly supported by multi-disciplinary Rapid Response teams from the NERC as well as the commencement of the ring vaccination trail.

Key Ebola partners in **Liberia** – CDC, IRC, OCHA, OFDA, UNICEF, and WHO – have worked on Phase 3 planning and identified the minimum critical activities required in the plan. These activities have been shared with donors and partners for the purpose of identifying and filling funding gaps which are expected to be below US\$5 million for the period September 2015 – March 2016. Work is ongoing to ensure all of the key elements required for the implementation of Phase 3 capacity in Liberia, especially at sub-national level, are fully in place within the shortest time possible.

Regional

Cross-border collaboration

- On 16-18 September, the Liberian Ministry of Health, IOM and WHO conducted an assessment mission to Lofa and Nimba Counties in order to strengthen community-based events surveillance in the context of the integrated disease surveillance and response (IDSR) operations. The mission targeted county authorities, county health teams and civil society representatives. In addition, UNFPA and county health teams visited bordering health facilities in Lofa and Gbarpolu Counties to ensure strong border surveillance and to maintain and improve proper screening at crossing points.

- On 14-15 September in Guinea, the National Coordinator and the Ebola Crisis Manager led an inter-agency cross-border mission to Sierra Leone to meet with counterparts and share lessons-learned on Guinea's approach to quarantine and Ebola vaccination trials.

Guidance

- WHO has recently issued interim guidance on Ebola virus disease during pregnancy, including screening and management of Ebola cases, contacts and survivors. The guidance provides information on screening and triage of pregnant women in the context of an Ebola outbreak; IPC precautions for pregnant women at risk of EVD transmission during childbirth and complication management; management of pregnant EVD cases, contacts and survivors; and lactation and Ebola virus disease. The guidance can be found at: <http://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/ebola/pregnancy-guidance/en/>
- A meeting for key stakeholders aiming at producing a WHO Child Pocket Guide, a guide for pediatric clinical management in the context of Ebola, was held in Freetown during the week of 14 September. In addition, a generic WHO Hemorrhagic Fever clinical management pocket guide has been updated and will be published shortly.

Guinea

The recent case in Conakry underlined weaknesses in the alert system. One of the new reported cases was symptomatic within the community for two weeks followed by trips to two clinics in the capital before detection. Efforts are underway to strengthen contact tracing, which continues to be an issue with reports of as many as 11 per cent of contacts not traced on a given day during the reporting period.

Health

- There are currently eight patients in Ebola Treatment Centres: 7 in Conakry and 1 in Forecariah.



Joint WHO/UNICEF teams during sensitization in a village in Forecariah. Credit: UNICEF/T. La Rose.

Logistics

- The Logistics Cluster urgently called partners to remove their goods from logistics bases around the country as there is very little capacity currently available (less than eight per cent in Conakry). Warehousing provided by the Logistics Cluster will close by the end of the year.

Education

- Education Cluster partners are preparing for Back to School day, scheduled on 5 October. Cluster members have indicated that they are awaiting results from preliminary assessments conducted by national authorities to gauge preparedness levels of school preceding students' return. The Cluster has previously anticipated significant WASH needs be put in place and cartons of soap have been distributed.

Child Protection

- Save the Children held a training in Conakry, the first in a series of three, for community child protection networks. A total of 120 people participated in the training, which provided information on child protection, and on how to gather information on vulnerable children and refer children at risk. Currently 6,193 children in Guinea are registered as orphaned by Ebola.

Sierra Leone

The emergence of two transmission chains is evidence of the ongoing need for extreme vigilance in silent districts. The Ring Vaccination Trial is moving forward which is a positive step. Genetic sequencing of current cases continues in an effort to identify and track the origin of all transmission chains.

Health

- IOM clinicians have begun a new intervention in the Prison and Police hospitals in partnership with the Ebola Response Consortium. IOM staff will train hospital personnel on IPC as well as refurbish WASH facilities in both facilities over the next six months until February 2016.
- To increase demand for family planning in the context of Ebola, the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, with support from UNFPA, launched Sierra Leone's first ever National Family Planning Demand Generation Campaign with the theme: 'Children by Choice, not by Chance' on 8 September. The aim of the month long campaign is to improve reproductive health and increase uptake of family planning services.



Contact tracers on the ground in Robuya, Bombali district. Credit: WHO/ S. Bgorie.

Contact tracing / surveillance

- A WHO-led inter-agency rapid response team of epidemiologists, contact tracer mentors, community engagement specialists and infection prevention and control experts has started operations to stop Ebola transmission in Bombali district following the death of a 16-year-old schoolgirl from Robuya on 13 September.
- In Bombali, 778 contacts were identified and put under mandatory quarantine, including 18 high risk and 135 low risk contacts, and 625 under active monitoring. A detailed epidemiological investigation is underway to identify the possible source of transmission.
- In Kambia, the total number of contacts under quarantine is 831, of which 43 are high risk, 227 low risk and 561 under active monitoring.
- The Red Cross continues to implement community event-based surveillance in Port Loko district. Out of 50 notifications, 46 reported a death and 4 reported persons with suspected Ebola symptoms that needed further investigations. All were later confirmed negative.

Community engagement and social mobilization

- UNICEF-supported social mobilizers engaged with people in the quarantined households, as well as neighboring communities to reinforce key Ebola messages. Social mobilizers engaged more than 400 community leaders and 218 traditional healers on Ebola messages and early identification of the sick.

Psychosocial Support

- The Red Cross organized a psychosocial support workshop on 17 September involving key stakeholders in an effort to strengthen and streamline its psychosocial support. The programme targets Red Cross volunteers involved in Safe and Dignified burials and other EVD operations, including survivors and their families.
- UNICEF, in partnership with pillar organizations, provided psychosocial support and first aid sessions to the contacts and children in the quarantined homes. UNICEF distributed family tracing and reunification kits to 300 children, as well as recreational and learning kits to all 430 children in quarantine homes.

Education

- UNICEF has provided technical and material education support to children in the quarantined villages of Sella-Kafta, Kambia District including solar radios to quarantined households with 334 school-age children to enable them to access the Radio Education Programme. UNICEF is also supporting the children in quarantine households that are expected to sit for the National Primary School Examination (NPSE) with lesson notes.
- In Rubaya, Bombali District, UNICEF is conducting an assessment to identify the number of school-going children that are in the quarantined homes, the schools that these children were attending, and the availability of hygiene materials and their utilization. Lesson notes will be prepared for all class levels and distributed to the children under quarantine.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- UNICEF facilitated the construction of latrines in all of the quarantined households in Sella-Kafta, Kassirie Mathatoi, Mile 14 and Kalangba villages of Kambia District. In Rubaya, Bombali District, the construction of latrines in the high-risk households will begin this week. The Sierra Leone Water Company has delivered water, installed water tanks and distributed WASH and hygiene kits to the affected households in Sella-Kafta. In Rubaya, The distribution of hygiene kits is also ongoing.

Liberia

As during the previous reporting period, the number of reported suspect cases by counties is still very low as well as the percentage of dead bodies being swab-tested. The overall surveillance system still needs a lot of support and involvement, especially considering other infectious diseases such as measles which still represent a threat in Liberia. Last week a team of UNFPA, WHO and county health authorities went to Gorgopa County (in Yarwein – Mehnsommoh) to combat the measles outbreak in that area.



Staff from the Liberia General Services Agency training with WFP in Gbarnga, Bong County – Credit: WFP

Health System Restoration

- The Concern IPC Team continues to monitor, supervise and provide IPC supplies to 9 health-care facilities in Montserrado County, visiting the health facilities on a weekly basis and working closely with the staff to ensure that IPC protocols are followed and patients, staff and visitors remain safe. They also conducted Community Entry Dialogues at 4 health facilities in Brewerville where Concern IPC will be constructing triage and isolation units. The construction of the triage and isolation units at 14 sites in Montserrado and Grand Bassa Counties is progressing.
- Four ambulances were donated by UNICEF to the Ministry of Health (MoH) to support the restoration of health services, in particular maternal and newborn healthcare. The ambulances will provide transportation of complicated births to the nearest referral health facility. On 16 September, IOM and the Grand Cape Mount County Superintendent and County Health Team hosted a town hall meeting with local religious leaders, youth leaders, women's groups and civil society representatives to discuss the closure of the Ebola treatment unit (ETU) in Sinje and the transfer of responsibility for Ebola health-care in the region (Gbarpolu, Bomi and GCM) to the local Government Hospital in Tubmanburg.

Psychosocial Support

- UNICEF provided 18 vehicles to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in Liberia to facilitate the movement of 220 personnel who will continue to provide case management and reintegration follow-up

visits, psychosocial support, family tracing and reunification, monitoring of alternative care institutions and monitoring and reporting of child rights violations of all vulnerable children in the 15 counties.

Logistics

- WFP Common Services is implementing the strategy and workplan for transitioning the supply chain capacity developed during the Ebola response in Liberia, from WFP to the identified institutions in the Government of Liberia. This includes transfer of knowledge and identified assets and facilities. The General Services Agency (GSA), as a cross ministerial agency, has been designated to eventually take over management of the WFP Common Services main logistics base and forward logistics bases deployed during the response. A training plan has been put in place.

Education

- Concern IPC has conducted a Back-to-School Program in all districts in Grand Bassa County involving 20 schools. The objective of the programme is to create community awareness about the importance of education for primary students and safety measures that include continued hand washing in schools, encouraging parents to send their children to school as part of recovery from Ebola, encouraging access to equal and quality education for all children.
- Children are gradually starting to return to schools, which opened on 7 September. Prior to the opening, the Ministry of Education has, with funding from the Global Partnership for Education, distributed books to all public schools. Also, UNICEF is training 10,000 teachers and 5,000 PTA members in pedagogic and psychosocial support and first aid.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- The WASH-in-School national protocol has been validated by the Ministry of Education, WASH and Education clusters members. UNICEF has supported the Government of Liberia to develop technical guidelines for school sanitation services. The first draft of this orientation document is available and is currently being reviewed by all stakeholders. In addition, preparations are underway to conduct school assessments for the entire country. The objective is to collect rational baseline data with key WASH-in-school indicators.
- Other ongoing WASH activities from partners such as the American Refugee Committee, IOM, Oxfam and Concern focus on improving waste management, water catchments and drainage in health facilities throughout the country.

Livelihood

- WFP continues to support Ebola-affected communities to assist them to resume livelihood activities and improve road access by supporting rehabilitation through Food for Assets (FFA) for over 26,000 people 11 counties: Grand Gedeh, Grand Cape Mount, Sinoe, River Gee, Bomi, Lofa, Nimba, Maryland, Grand Kru, Margibi and Rivercess. More than 350 mt of food rations and seeds will be distributed.

Child Protection

- With support from UNICEF, more than 12,000 children under 12 years of age had their birth registered and birth certificates issued across all 15 counties in Liberia. The Ebola outbreak disrupted birth registrations, leaving thousands of children without citizenship and in danger of being trafficked or illegally adopted.

Upcoming events

- To address the specific needs tied to their condition, the National Coordination Centre in Guinea, with the support of the international community, is hosting a National Ebola Survivor Conference in Kindia from 5-7 October. The outcome of the meeting will be an inter-sector strategy to support Ebola survivors. Currently, 1,267 Ebola survivors have been registered in Guinea.