

**Briefing by Dr. David Nabarro
Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Ebola**

United Nations General Assembly

20 January 2015

Your Excellency President of the General Assembly,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Colleagues,

I thank you very much for convening this event and for keeping the focus of Member States on the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

I apologize that I am unable to be with you today in person -- I made my sixth visit to the West Africa region recently and just returned last week -- now I am visiting potential supporters in order to try to mobilize more assistance.

We have heard how the outbreak has had a devastating impact in West Africa but we have also heard positive news. Mali was declared this week free of Ebola -- yet another example, after Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo and Senegal.

We have also heard how the outbreak is evolving and diminishing in the three most affected countries. In fact, week by week the incidence of new cases is dropping.

The outbreak feels different now; it is no longer a single outbreak spreading from a central point. It is a collection of micro-outbreaks, each with its own character and specific needs.

Mr. President,

It is like when you kick the logs from a campfire, leaving only scattered embers. Some are burning hot; others are dying out. So it is with the Ebola outbreak.

As the outbreak has evolved, so has the response. It is focused on being nimble, flexible and adaptable. It is responding to the special conditions of densely populated urban areas, rural communities and borders areas.

Within the response, we are all committed to treating people with Ebola and increasingly to hunting the virus wherever it is found through rigorous case finding and contact tracing.

As we have heard, we are looking to the end of the outbreak, to supporting swift recovery. Schools, markets, businesses need to open and open safely, health systems being built back stronger in the affected countries and beyond.

We are looking forward to an important conference, jointly organized by the European Union and the United Nations on March 3 in Brussels where the current state of the outbreak and the response, as well as recovery will be considered.

Thousands of people are involved in this extraordinary response, patient attendants, nurses and doctors, those who move the sick to hospitals, those who bury the dead. Most are from the affected countries, hundreds of thousands of people, all committed, all working hard, often without a day off, without time off at all.

Many are volunteers from abroad, we have heard of the extraordinary response of ECOWAS, and of the African Union, and of international NGOs. All are working under very difficult and dangerous conditions.

I am pleased also to report that many of the donor nations and partner organizations continue to be engaged and to want to help. They realize that the outbreak will not be over until the last case has been identified and treated. They realize that Ebola will not be gone in any country until it is gone from every country. They want to coordinate.

The Secretary-General's Global Ebola response coalition continues to meet each week, it has just had meeting number 14 and it has just produced the "Outlook 2015 Report".

The "Overview of Needs and Requirements" for the UN system has just been updated and it will be released tomorrow. It shows that the UN system continues to need funds. As the Secretary-General said, his Multi-partner Trust Fund is very active. It has already distributed to the whole system more than US \$100 million. It is an enormously valuable investment, it needs to be refilled.

We have heard how neighbouring countries are particularly vulnerable, and the international system is working closely with them on preparedness.

There are a number of requirements for getting to zero cases, as Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed has pointed out.

Let's make certain that communities are at the centre of the continued effort, that skilled people are where they are most needed, that coordination led by national governments and supported by international experts is fully effective.

Let's make certain that there is real-time information and data on epidemiology and on anthropology and that we get the material, financial support, medical evacuation facilities, treatment, comfort, safety, logistics and transport for all responders.

Looking forward Mr. President, it will be necessary to learn lessons. Recriminations are counter-productive but it will be necessary to understand whether this outbreak could have been responded to quicker, with less cost and less suffering.

The World Health Organization will initiate a special session of its Executive board on January 25 to start looking at how future global health emergencies can be handled with better efficiency and effectiveness.

Mr. President,

I thank you again for this important event. I am delighted to have had the chance to address the General Assembly.

Thank you.
