

UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) External Situation Report

29 October 2014

HIGHLIGHTS

- The WHO reports that 82 people who had contact with a toddler who died of EVD in Mali are being monitored but no new cases of the disease have yet been reported.
- The UN Secretary-General met with African Union Commission Chairperson Dr. Zuma and World Bank President Kim in Addis Ababa to discuss the response to the EVD outbreak.

Key Political and Economic Developments

1. The UN Secretary-General met with African Union Commission Chairperson Dr. Zuma and World Bank President Kim in Addis Ababa to discuss how to best support the international community's efforts to address the EVD outbreak. He welcomed pledges by African nations to send medical personnel to the affected countries and highlighted the urgent need for more. The Secretary-General also reiterated that quarantines which are not based on scientific evidence will only hamper our efforts and undermine the strong commitment by many health workers who are ready help the people on the ground. President Kim called for at least 5,000 more health workers to effectively fight the epidemic.
2. US Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, highlighted the increase in safe burials in Freetown, Sierra Leone - from 30 per cent to 98 per cent - during her visit there. People in Freetown phone a number to report someone who could be infected with EVD or for a body to be taken away. Special burial teams are deployed and the aim is to have the bodies removed within 24 hours of the call being received. British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Peter West, noted that data had shown nearly 80 percent of infections in the Western Area region, which covers Freetown, were from touching dead bodies of EVD victims.
3. The UNMEER ECM for Guinea, Marcel Rudasingwa, co-chaired a planning workshop with the National Coordinator of the Ebola Coordination Cell on the operationalization of the National Response Plan. The workshop examined progress to date, identified gaps in the response and assessed institutional effectiveness.

Human Rights

4. Stigmatisation and discrimination of EVD affected people persists. Burial teams in some parts of Liberia face discrimination as community members want landlords to evict them. There are also concerns that these workers cannot go about their daily activities easily which increases food insecurity threatens livelihoods.

Medical

5. The WHO reports that 82 people who had contact with a toddler who died of EVD in Mali are being monitored but no new cases of the disease have yet been reported.
6. 17 new Ebola Treatment Units (ETUs) are under construction in Liberia to supplement current system. The aim is to have at least one functioning ETU in each of Liberia's 15 Counties. This will bolster health systems and infrastructure to be able to withstand infectious disease outbreaks.
7. Switzerland has approved the testing of an experimental EVD vaccine from GlaxoSmithKline on healthy volunteers, some of whom will be travelling to West Africa as medical staff. The trial will be conducted among 120 volunteer participants at the Lausanne University Hospital, with support from the World Health Organization. The volunteers, who include many medical students, will be monitored for six months to determine both the safety and efficacy of the vaccine. There is a small

control group of volunteers among them who will be given a placebo. Volunteers going into the field will not receive the placebo, for ethical reasons.

8. UNICEF procured sufficient supplies to address the nutrition needs of orphans and infants under 6 months in ETUs in Liberia. In addition, 6 metric tons of chlorine was released to the health ministry last week.
9. The WHO has reported that many people in the most affected countries have been unable or too frightened to seek medical care. A shortage of labs capable of handling potentially infected blood samples has also made it difficult to track the outbreak.

Logistics

10. The Forécariah (Guinea) Transit Centre has now been opened. The Prime Minister of Guinea, the French Ambassador, the WHO Country Representative, and the National Coordinator of the Ebola Coordination Cell, amongst others, attended the ceremony.
11. 30 French trainers arrived in Guinea to train 200 members of the civilian protection force. Their 9-week mission will focus on civilian protection and EVD specific training, including contact tracing and logistical support to treatment centers.

Resource Mobilisation

12. The OCHA Ebola Virus Outbreak Overview of Needs and Requirements of USD 988 million has received USD 493 million, which is just under 50 per cent of the total ask.
13. The Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund currently has USD 27.7 million in commitments. In total USD 116 million has been pledged, surpassing the target of USD 100 million by end of October 2014.
14. All humanitarian partners, including donors and recipient agencies, are encouraged to inform OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (FTS - <http://fts.unocha.org>) of cash and in-kind contributions by e-mailing: fts@un.org.

Outreach and Education

15. The Liberian Minister of Education reported that his ministry had distributed sanitary materials to seven counties through student groups in the fight against EVD and was currently conducting district level social mobilization training on EVD prevention for 11,400 teachers and administrators. The Minister also launched the "Teaching by Radio" programme to keep students engaged in the wake of nationwide school closures following the EVD outbreak. Radio broadcasts of EVD awareness messages in local and traditional languages have also now begun in Liberia.

Essential Services

16. UNICEF is re-activating essential immunization efforts to curb vaccine-preventable diseases and is in the process of procuring supplies to ensure infection prevention and control in addition to funding training, outreach and field monitoring.

Upcoming Events

- 26-29 October US Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, travels to Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Ghana.
- 11 December - Global Compact CEO-level Action Pledge Event at the UN.

Attachments and resources

- OCHA EVD fact sheets and 3Ws for Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone (recently updated): <http://reliefweb.int/maps>