

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

31 October 2014

HIGHLIGHTS

- World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim announced in Ghana, Accra, an additional \$100 million funding in its Ebola crisis response.
- US Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power has seen evidence that the international response is starting to yield results yet more action is still required.
- A UK naval ship, RFA Argus, completed its 10-day voyage from England to Sierra Leone.

Key Political and Economic Developments

1. World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim announced in Ghana, Accra, an additional \$100 million funding in its Ebola crisis response to speed up deployment of foreign health workers to the three worst-affected countries in West Africa. The announcement increases the World Bank Group's funding for the Ebola fight over the last three months in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to more than \$500 million. This additional financing will help set up a coordination hub in close cooperation with the three countries, the WHO, UNMEER, and other agencies to recruit, train and deploy qualified foreign health workers. President Kim also met with UNMEER SRSG Banbury to discuss this new programme as well as progress on the wider response toward meeting the goals of 70 per cent of safe burials and 70 per cent of cases isolated by 1 December 2014.
2. US Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, has said that some countries are yet to shoulder their share of the EVD response burden and restrictions on aid workers returning home from affected countries could deter thousands from helping. She said there were still not enough doctors, and nurses, nor basic medical supplies such as plastic gloves, bleach and thermometers. Ambassador Power did, however, acknowledge that foreign aid and a stronger local response were beginning to make a difference. She gave examples of Muslim clerics in Guinea encouraging people to bury EVD victims safely, a US Navy Ebola testing lab in Liberia giving those who might be infected their results within hours rather than days and a clinic run by Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) in the Liberian capital Monrovia that now had enough beds so that it no longer had to turn away patients. Ambassador Power made these comments from Brussels having concluded her visit to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.
3. National Response Coordinator for Sierra Leone, Steven Gaojia, and UNMEER Ebola Crisis Manager, Amadu Kamara, witnessed first hand the scale-up of the response in Port Loko, by visiting the country's first two Community Care Centres, run by WHO, a Forward Logistics Operating base, run by WFP, and a Command and Control Centre for safe burials and ambulance coordination.
4. A planning workshop co-chaired by UNMEER and the National Coordinator of the Ebola Coordination Cell in Guinea was concluded with a presentation to President Condé on the main outcomes of the discussion.
5. A UNDP socio-economic impact study on Guinea has shown that economic growth in the country slowed from 4.5 percent to 2.4 percent. In addition, government revenue has decreased by USD 105 million while expenses have increased by USD 100 million, prompting the Government to revise its budget for the coming months. The study also notes a deterioration of poor households' food and nutritional security, postponement of the beginning of the school year and lower attendance rates in health facilities: hospital visits have decreased by 53 percent, medical appointments by 59 percent, C-sections are down 14 percent, and vaccinations 30 percent.

Human Rights

6. The WHO reports that survivors of EVD have not found life easy on the other side. Some in the community brand them as "witches" for surviving and a phenomenon called "post-Ebola syndrome" has been noted in survivors, including a range of symptoms such as visual problems, body aches, headaches and extreme fatigue. The latter is making it difficult to take up their former lives, especially if it involved manual work as farmers, laborers and household managers.

Medical

7. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) urged caution over claims of a slowdown in EVD transmission in Liberia, saying the apparent drop could be due to poor management of the sick. The number of admissions in MSF's 250-bed Monrovia Ebola centre dropped to around 80 yet mandatory cremation of dead bodies and a poor ambulance and referral system could also be the reason for this.
8. New analysis from the Yale School of Public Health published in the Journal Science finds that the greatest impact in terms of the EVD response would come from insuring safe burials. The findings published are based on a mathematical model that takes into account data from the current outbreak and previous ones, including how long people harbor the virus before becoming ill, how long they are infectious, and what percentage are isolated at home or in a treatment center. If transmission in the community or in hospitals could be eliminated through better isolation practices, the study finds that each EVD case would still cause 1.4 or 1.5 additional infections. Yet if transmission via burial practices were eliminated, the secondary infection rate would drop below one per EVD case, the sole way epidemics peter out.

Logistics

9. A UK naval ship, RFA Argus, completed its 10-day voyage from southwest England to Freetown, Sierra Leone. Some 80 medics and 80 marines were among the 350 people on board, bringing the total UK deployment to Sierra Leone to about 900 people. The ship also arrived with 32 pick-up trucks, three Merlin utility helicopters, aircrew and engineers to provide transport and support to medical teams and aid workers.
10. UNICEF has flown in 755 metric tons of emergency aid to Liberia since the beginning of the EVD outbreak. This includes a cargo plane carrying 105 metric tons of supplies, including pharmaceutical and health kits as well as ready-to-use therapeutic food, such as nutritional biscuits and therapeutic spread.
11. A cargo plane transporting 14 ambulances took off today from Spain and is travelling to Guinea as part of UNICEF's efforts to health equipment to the EVD-affected country. This is the third cargo airlift funded by contributions from the European Commission.
12. There have been continued challenges faced in cross-border transport. A convoy of mobile storage units from the UNHRD in Ghana on its way to Liberia has been held at the Liberian - Ivorian border and is awaiting release from authorities. Poor roads and ongoing road works and rehabilitation have caused delay in transporting supplies up country, including transport of equipment for Forward Logistics Bases.

Resource Mobilisation

13. The OCHA Ebola Virus Outbreak Overview of Needs and Requirements of USD 988 million has received USD 540 million, which is just under 55 per cent of the total ask.
14. The Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund currently has deposits of USD 13.6 million and commitments of USD 60.2 million. In total, USD 117 million has been pledged, surpassing the target of USD 100 million by end of October 2014.
15. 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

16. The WHO in Guinea conducted training of 32 community workers and heads of health centers on contact tracing and sensitization.

Essential Services

17. UNICEF partnered with the Red Cross in Liberia to provide training and infection prevention and control supplies to help enable safer isolation and community-based home protection to any person suspected with EVD, in the event that immediate access to an ETU and CCC is not possible. This

project will target 'hot spot' locations, with the capacity for up to 10,000 suspected sick persons to be isolated as early as possible in their homes, while waiting to be transported to a treatment unit.

Upcoming Events

- 11 December - Global Compact CEO-level Action Pledge Event at the UN.