



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **UNMEER TO OPEN OFFICE IN MALI IMMEDIATELY**

Accra, Ghana (21 November 2014) – The United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) will open an office in Mali immediately to support national efforts against the Ebola virus.

The move follows a visit paid by the Head of UNMEER, the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Anthony Banbury, to the Sahelian country on Wednesday, and a conversation today between Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta.

While there to discuss if UNMEER support was needed, the Special Representative met a range of national and international partners involved in the country's Ebola response, including the President, the Minister of Health and Public Hygiene, Ousmane Koné, and the national response coordinator, Professor Samba Sow. In their meeting, President Keïta and the Special Representative discussed the world body's efforts to support Mali's Ebola response and the possibility of establishing an UNMEER presence in the country.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon spoke with President Keïta today and the latter confirmed his request for an UNMEER presence. Subsequently, the Secretary-General today instructed his Special Representative to open an office immediately.

The Special Representative noted that the Government of Mali has taken action to deal with Ebola within its borders, that it was important that lessons learnt from other countries dealing with Ebola are applied and that strong, decisive action is taken now in the disease's early stages in the country. Mr. Banbury also noted the crucial role played by the international community in supporting national efforts.

"UNMEER is committed to supporting the Government of Mali's Ebola response efforts," he said. "The country has a small number of cases now and this means there is a chance to end it quickly before it becomes a true crisis the way it has become in other countries."

The UNMEER office will be tailored to support Mali's response efforts, with three expected areas of focus: reinforcing the country's operational response, strengthening the country's level of preparedness and assisting with cross-border coordination of Ebola efforts between Malian and Guinean authorities.

UNMEER will review the needs of its Mali office's operations in two months.

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For more information:

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