

WFP Operational Update

15 October 2014

WFP GEARS UP GLOBAL LOGISTICS AND FOOD ASSISTANCE BY LAND, SEA AND AIR FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST EBOLA

DAKAR/ROME – Logistical support to the global Ebola response is in high gear – with the latest supply flight en route today from Italy to Liberia – as the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) reported reaching more than 530,000 people with food assistance in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The flight, carrying 58 metric tons of supplies including water tanks, washing units and generators, took off from the WFP-managed UN Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) in Brindisi, Italy. It is one of a series of dispatches this week from UNHRD bases in Dubai, Accra, Ghana and Las Palmas in Spain with protective gear, emergency health kits, relief items and other equipment for use throughout the affected region.

“The world is mobilizing and we need to reach the smallest villages in the most remote locations. Indications are that things will get worse before they improve. How much worse depends on us all,” said Denise Brown, WFP’s Regional Director for West Africa.

“At WFP, we have shifted gears to support the international community to stem this unprecedented virus outbreak. We are delivering food, of course, but also building Ebola treatment centres and logistics hubs, using planes, helicopters, ships and trucks.”

In addition to the supply flights, the WFP-managed response to the Ebola virus outbreak includes:

- A WFP-contracted ship left Cotonou, Benin, on 14 October, with 7,000 metric tons of rice. It is scheduled to reach Freetown in Sierra Leone before the end of the week, before heading to Monrovia, Liberia.
- The Logistics Cluster grouping UN agencies and NGOs, and managed by WFP, is running a common logistics hub in Monrovia with 3,000 square metres of storage, and has established a new hub at Conakry airport in Guinea. An additional 12 forward logistics bases are being set up in remote areas in the three affected countries. These will support the health response with common services such as construction, storage, procurement and transport.
- In Liberia, at the request of the government and World Health Organization, WFP is doing groundwork for four Ebola Treatment Units in Monrovia with a total of 400 beds. Construction of two of the centres are expected to be completed by this weekend.
- The WFP-managed United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) has opened an air corridor between Dakar, Accra, Freetown, Monrovia and Conakry to help rapidly deploy humanitarian staff to the field. UNHAS has so far transported over 800 passengers and 10 tons of cargo for 34 organizations, using two fixed-wing aircraft and one helicopter.

- WFP provides food assistance to patients in Ebola treatment centres, survivors of Ebola discharged from medical centres and to communities with widespread and intense transmission – including the families of people infected with Ebola in treatment, deceased, or recovering.
- WFP food distributions are underway in all three countries, in both urban and rural areas, often house-to-house, one family at a time, including to quarantined communities – and more food is on the way.
- An additional 100 WFP staff – logisticians, engineers, operations support officers and telecommunications specialists – have been mobilized across the region to support more than 360 WFP colleagues already focused on the Ebola response.
- The outbreak is starting to have an impact of people's ability to feed themselves. Assessments, done with an innovative technique using mobile phones, show deteriorating family food security in the districts of Kailahun and Kenema in Sierra Leone. These are precisely the districts most affected by Ebola.

Additional Information:

The UN Humanitarian Response Depots (UNHRD), managed by WFP, are supporting the Ebola response efforts of WHO, WFP, Irish Aid, Japan International Cooperation Agency and the UN Refugee Agency. The depots in Dubai, Ghana, Spain and Italy have so far dispatched 449 metric tons, worth US\$ 3.9 million, of protective gear, emergency health kits, relief and support equipment to the region. Dispatches by Spain are by ship.

WFP's logistical and food assistance operation is undertaken in support of a unified response under the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) in order to support the humanitarian community to enable the best health response against the spread of Ebola.

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Broadcast quality footage of the Ebola response can be downloaded at this link:

<http://bit.ly/1seJDxs>

A Video story on WFP's Ebola response is at this link:

<http://bit.ly/1nlGGfx>

High resolution photographs of the Ebola response can be obtained by contacting

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WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide, delivering food in emergencies and working with communities to build resilience. In 2013, WFP assisted more than 80 million people in 75 countries.

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