



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **UNMEER CHIEF ARRIVING IN LIBERIA TODAY FOR A FINAL REVIEW OF PROGRESS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST EBOLA**

Monrovia, 29 December 2014 - Anthony Banbury, the Head of the first ever UN System-wide emergency health mission called the UN Mission for the Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) is arriving in Liberia today as part of his final tour of the three countries most affected by the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak. In each country, he will review progress in the fight against Ebola and areas where the UN can do more to help.

Upon his arrival, Banbury is scheduled to meet with President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as well as UNMEER and UNMIL staff.

Appointed in September, Banbury's tour of duty is coming to an end on 3 January 2015. He will be replaced by Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed of Mauritania who is expected to visit the Ebola affected countries in early 2015.

During Banbury's two-day visit in Liberia, he will travel to Sinje, Grand Cape Mount County for the opening of the new 50-bed Ebola Treatment Unit run by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Grand Cape Mount has reported six confirmed cases in the north of the county near the Sierra Leone border in December. Despite these cases, nationwide, the incidence of EVD has been declining since mid-November.

Lofa County has not reported any new cases in eight consecutive weeks. UNMEER Liberia Ebola Crisis Manager, Peter Graff, said that this is significant as Lofa County, the initial site of the first outbreak in Liberia, is bordered by Sierra Leone and Guinea, both countries grappling with the Ebola virus outbreak.

UNMEER coordination and information sharing with the community, medical personnel, county health teams and non-governmental organizations are credited for the success in winning the fight against Ebola. However, there is still more work to be done in terms of contact tracing, behavior change and the cross-border prevention and control of EVD.

Banbury will also travel to Saniquellie, Nimba County where he will meet with the County Health Team and healthcare workers.

With regard to the UNMEER Ebola reduction strategy, Liberia has met the 70-70-60 target set by Banbury, standing for 70% of reported infected people taken to health care facilities and 70% of burials conducted safely in the three most affected countries by the 60<sup>th</sup> day of the mission on 1 October.

To reach zero new cases, UNMEER has also supported Liberia in the organization and launch of the Ebola Must Go! Stopping Ebola is Everybody's Business Campaign.

Recognizing the importance of this initiative, Mr. Banbury pledged \$10,000 dollars to the campaign and \$1,000 dollars to the UNICEF designated New Georgia Signboard Community, where the campaign was launched 8 December 2014. UNMEER also donated 10 Nissan Patrols to the Liberian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in early December.

In addition, Banbury, working closely with the Governments of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, is coordinating cross-border efforts to fight Ebola.

After visiting Liberia, he will conclude his tour of the region with a trip to Sierra Leone.

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For more information:

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