

**Global Ebola Response Coalition**  
**28 August 2015**  
**Issues Discussed and Next Steps**

The forty-second meeting of the Global Ebola Response Coalition Core Group took place on 28 August. The main points covered in the meeting follow.

**Status of the outbreak**

1. Participants discussed the status of the outbreak. There were three people newly diagnosed with Ebola in week 34 (ending on 23 August) in Guinea.
2. In Guinea, the new reports of transmission are coming from Conakry. In the current week, there have been two deaths in the community, giving rise to high-risk contacts. These incidents indicate that the transmission chains are not fully understood and that there may be further risks of spread.
3. In Sierra Leone, there were no new reports of transmission in week 34. There are concerns about a risk of undetected transmission in the Western Area of Sierra Leone, which is being addressed through house-to-house searches and social mobilisation activities as part of Operation Safeguard.
4. The number of active chains of transmission chains has reduced from six to three. Two chains are from Guinea (in Conakry/Dubr ka and For cariah) and one chain is from Magazine Wharf in Sierra Leone.

**Progress of the response**

5. Participants highlighted the need to address the issue of survivors in a sensitive, yet pragmatic manner, and emphasised that any focus on the challenges faced by survivors should not contribute to their stigmatisation. It is important to avoid portraying survivors as people who are likely to transmit the virus; instead, it should be emphasized that they are heroes who have prevailed in the struggle against Ebola.
6. Participants noted the importance of maintaining various elements of the response – surveillance, alert, rapid reaction and laboratory testing – until the end of 2015 and beyond. These capacities will be needed to manage the risks associated with survivors and possible flare-ups of disease. Longer-term engagement in the countries will also be required to support health security. UNICEF is committed to stay engaged in all the countries, to work with the communities, and to provide support for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), social protection, and psycho-social needs. In parts of Guinea, MSF is maintaining its capacity to redeploy within 48 hours, as needed.

7. Focusing on Guinea, participants stressed the importance of maintaining vigilance given the high risks associated with recent transmissions in the Conakry area. They also expressed caution that the upcoming elections may hamper response efforts.
8. In Sierra Leone, the last Ebola patient was discharged from care on 24 August. The President travelled to the Western Area at the time of discharge to remind responders that there are still risks that need to be managed.
9. In Liberia, progress continues to be made and the 42-day countdown continues. Limitations in laboratory capacity have been a challenge given the need to test swabs from dead bodies and there has been a backlog of samples to be tested. IFRC has been working to strengthen the capacities of local institutions and examining issues around survivors, in particular, by supporting their livelihoods and psycho-social needs, and sensitizing communities.

### **Recovery initiatives**

10. UNDP stressed that the UN system has been paying attention to recovery since the beginning of the outbreak and recovery efforts have intensified in recent months. Since the International Ebola Recovery Conference in July, the Resident Coordinators have been working with the UN Country Teams and other partners to organise the coordination of the partners that are supporting recovery. It is clear that recovery efforts must take place under strong government leadership and ownership. Priority has been given to helping governments to strengthen their capacity to coordinate external assistance during the recovery phase, including finances to track and manage the resources for recovery and monitor proposals for recovery. UNDP is also following-up on the pledges and the commitments made during the Conference. To date, the details of the pledges have been confirmed for 12 of the 19 countries that made commitments during the Conference.
11. The UNDP Resident Coordinator in Sierra Leone reported that there are weekly in-country meetings of the partners that are supporting recovery. A UN country plan for recovery is being put together to reflect how the different development partners are working to align their efforts with the national recovery plan.
12. The Ebola Private Sector Mobilisation Group and USAID reported on a recent webinar in which a call was made for proposals to support the recovery of Ebola-affected nations in West Africa. USAID is already involved in supporting the restoration of essential health services, livelihood and food production, through Development Alliances. USAID is encouraging partnerships in the areas of health care systems and infrastructure strengthening, global health security, information and community technology, education and workforce development, economic development, social protection and energy infrastructure. The deadline for proposals is 16 October 2015. Further information about the call for proposals for “Partnering for a More Resilient

West Africa” can be found at: <https://www.usaid.gov/ebola/gda>

### **Any other business**

13. The WHO Review Committee on the Role of the International Health Regulations (2005) in the Ebola Outbreak and Response met on 24 -25 August. The Review Committee identified five challenges relating to the IHR: (i) insufficient public awareness of the IHR; (ii) the need to review the warning mechanisms in the IHR and consider an intermediate warning level before the declaration of a public health emergency of international concern; (iii) the importance of ensuring national capacities to implement the IHR; (iv) strengthening the system to ensure compliance with the IHR; and (v) reviewing the legal text for areas in need of clarification or amendment. The Review Committee expects to finalize a preliminary draft report for presentation to the Executive Board and to present it to the World Health Assembly in May 2016

### **Summary**

14. In summary, the following issues were highlighted:

- There are still three active chains of transmission, two in Guinea (Conakry and Forécariah) and one in Western Sierra Leone. A high degree of vigilance is needed and flare-ups can be expected.
- WHO and other partners are continuing to work with governments to sustain a rapid response capacity that will enable detection, contact tracing, case management and prompt follow-up.
- The Phase 3 response will focus on identifying risks, ensuring rapid response capacity, and providing special support to survivors.
- The work will continue to make sure that there is a sustained capacity through to the end of the year, with a community based approach.
- There are common issues across three countries: different partners are working with local institutions to make sure that within the countries, there are coordination and management mechanisms for recovery. Efforts are being made to ensure that those involved in recovery are able to access the resources they need to fulfil their responsibilities.