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

18 March 2015

KEY POINTS

- Significantly more EVD cases last week in Guinea than in Sierra Leone for the first time since the start of the current outbreak.
- UNICEF report highlights the impact that Ebola has had on children in the affected countries.
- UNDP continues to support the healthcare infrastructure in Liberia.

Key Political and Economic Developments

1. UNMEER SRSG Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed visited Sierra Leone from 15 to 17 March. In addition to meetings with UNMEER staff, the diplomatic community, the UNCT and the National Ebola Response Coordination (NERC), the SRSG also met President Ernest Bai Koroma, discussing national and international Ebola response efforts in Sierra Leone.

Response Efforts and Health

2. In total, 24,666 confirmed, probable, and suspected cases of EVD have been reported in the three most affected countries. There have been 10,179 reported deaths.

3. For the first time since the start of this EVD outbreak, this week's figures will show that the number of confirmed cases in Guinea have significantly surpassed Sierra Leone, with 98 and 60 cases respectively. This is the largest weekly number of cases in Guinea since mid-January 2015.

4. On 17 March, there were 14 new confirmed EVD cases in Sierra Leone, according to the National Ebola Response Centre (NERC). By district, the cases were in Kambia (8), Western Area Urban (3), Port Loko (1), Moyamba (1) and Western Area Rural (1).

5. UNMEER Liberia and UNICEF had a meeting with the OIC of Jowarh clinic this week for more information on the screening work being conducted by the general Community Health Workers (gCHVs) at Jowarh border in Bong County. The gCHVs are working a 24 hour shift as agreed and reported no major challenges. UNMEER/UNICEF also visited 5 schools in Gbarnga to assess if school authorities were adhering to the mandated EVD prevention protocols. All 5 schools were observed to be compliant although access to water sources were far from the schools.

6. In the Prefecture of Lola (Guinea) 24 traced contacts completed their 21-day observation period on 16 March. Only two more contacts remain under observation to date.

7. In Liberia, UNDP continues to support the healthcare infrastructure with the completion of a second autoclave in Tappita, Nimba County at the Jackson F. Doe Referral Hospital. The initiative supports Liberia in raising the level of healthcare waste management towards meeting WHO guidelines while introducing the cleaner state-of-the-art technologies now used in developed countries for destroying infectious waste. To boost the maintenance of the equipment, training was conducted in healthcare waste management and infection control at the 2 hospitals for medical and nursing staff; waste workers; cleaners; administrators; operators and maintenance technicians.

Logistics

8. For regular logistics operational information please visit http://www.logcluster.org/ops/ebola14.

Resource Mobilisation

9. The OCHA Ebola Virus Outbreak Overview of Needs and Requirements, now totaling USD 2.27 billion, has been funded for USD 1.41 billion, which is around 62% of the total ask.

10. The Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund currently has USD 136.8 million in commitments. In total USD 140 million has been pledged.

11. All humanitarian partners, including donors and recipient agencies, are encouraged to inform OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (http://fts.unocha.org) of their contributions via the e-mail address: fts@un.org.

Outreach and Education

12. UNICEF issued a report on 17 March entitled 'Ebola: Getting to Zero – for Communities, for children, for the future'. The report states that Ebola has taken a dramatic toll on Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, killing thousands, affecting livelihoods, disrupting public service delivery, putting education on hold, undermining economic growth and threatening the development progress that had been achieved in recent years. The report notes that 9 million children live in Ebola affected areas; 5 million children have lost months of schooling; there have been more than 5,000 Ebola cases among children; and more than 16,000 children have lost one or both parents or their primary caregiver.

13. UNMEER Liberia along with the County Health Team (CHT), UNICEF and the Gbehlay-Geh District Education Officer visited Zeanlay community in Nimba County this week to explain the government mandated protocols for safe school environment health as well as to dispel rumours about Ebola vaccinations. The visit followed a 12 March incident when a UNICEF district coordinator had been threatened by the community because of rumours about Ebola vaccinations. The meeting was attended by about 35 community members including the town chief, community elders, women and youth during which they apologized for the incident which they attributed to fear of the Ebola virus and a general lack of information on the activities of various agencies/organisations in the area. The town chief assured the participants that the Zeanlay community will cooperate fully with health officials during the upcoming national immunisation campaign.

Essential Services

14. This week the Acting Minister for Health in Liberia opened a 5 day 'training of trainers' course which has been developed by the Ministry of Health, with support from WHO, and will be rolled out nationally. The objective of the new course is to build county and district healthcare worker capacity and confidence in infection prevention and control (IPC) measures as well as non-Ebola and Ebola Treatment Unit (ETU) clinical management to ensure quality treatment of EVD cases and to support routine health care delivery restoration and the prevention of future outbreaks. There were approximately 30 participants on the first course.

15. The Head of Unit for Surveillance and Response Support in the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (E-CDC) arrived in N'zérékoré this week to discuss post-Ebola activities.

Upcoming Events

16. NSTR

Attachments and resources

17. Reliefweb: Maps on the EVD response.