

Global Ebola Response Coalition Meeting
31 October 2014
Issues Discussed and Next Steps

The Secretary General's Special Envoy chaired the fourth meeting of the Global Ebola Response Coalition Core Group on 31 October.

In his introduction the Chair reminded participants that he was very interested in their views of the Coalition, however short, and these should be passed to John Gordon (john.gordon@undp.org). We would share the conclusions of the feedback in due course. Initial feedback had suggested that weekly meetings were welcomed as long as the discussion was focused and strategic.

The main points covered in the meeting were:

WHO updated on the **latest epidemiological situation in Liberia**, where we were seeing possible signs of a reduction in transmission rates. We should, however, interpret the data with caution, keeping in mind the weakness in health information systems, particularly at sub-national level. We should also regard WHO figures as the most conservative and likely to be under estimates. They were uneven patterns in transmission across countries. The key message was that it would be important to stay vigilant. We would assess what impact this latest epidemiological information had on our planning assumptions.

There had been productive discussions at the AU meetings earlier in the week, on the issue of providing **medical support** to the affected countries. The AU was pressing ahead with their plans to significantly scale up its provision of health workers. The World Bank had announced significant resources to support an end to end solution to the provision of foreign medical teams. This had been the subject of intensive discussion, particularly with WHO and UNMEER, during the week.

The work of **UNMEER** had been focused on: surging their own human resource capacity, with 100 staff now in the region; providing more granularity to their Information Management; and pushing their field presence, including down to district levels. They would be finalising the outcomes document from the Accra planning conference in the next few days and would be sharing that with partners. In the next week they would be briefing a report on the first 30 days, where they had been surging inputs and assets.

In **Guinea**, an operational plan had been agreed with the President. This included a dashboard which mapped out the activities needed to accelerate the response. This would drive the quality of the response and help to identify the critical gaps, which included shortages in the numbers of trained health personnel.

The first meeting of Advisory Committee of the **Secretary General's Ebola Trust Fund** had taken place this week. It has made its first allocation to WFP for their "last

mile” logistics special operation. The Committee included donor representatives and representatives of the three most affected countries.

The Chair introduced the **Ebola dashboard**. This was the product of intense work in UNMEER. It was based on the 30/60/90 day planning framework. The 30 day target had been to get inputs in place. The data included in the dashboard was the best available but was not completely reliable. It would be extremely useful as a tool to monitor progress.

The Chair updated the group on the state of **finances for supporting responses to the Ebola outbreak**. There were three elements. First: following the Accra planning Conference, the anticipated financial needs for stopping transmission, treating people with Ebola and preventing further spread during the period October 2014 to March 2015 have been revised upwards to reflect increased needs for treatment capacity. Second: similarly significant resources for the period April to September 2015 at a level commensurate with the scale of the outbreak at the time. Third: there will be significant needs for finance to support immediate and long term recovery.

In terms of **resource commitments**, OCHA’s Financial Tracking System (FTS) now records US\$686 million committed or pledged against the 16th September UN system Appeal for nearly US\$ 1 billion. This resources pledged to the Ebola Trust Fund (\$116m) are in addition to that amount. OCHA FTS also told us of resources committed beyond the parameters of the OCHA Appeal (for NGOs and other partners); this indicated a further US\$1.145 billion committed or pledged. This information shows that the world had responded generously to the appeals and we are all enormously grateful for these contributions. As well as maintaining the momentum on resource mobilisation, it is important to ensure the commitments and pledges are translated quickly to activities within Districts, Counties and Prefectures, and that they yield demonstrable impact on the outbreak by the end of the year.

In the area of **innovation**, several stakeholders are keen to involve new skills and ideas in the Ebola response. This brings a need for coordination to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure the focus is on the most urgent needs and on ideas with the potential for the biggest impact. Coordinated approaches to harnessing innovations for Ebola need to be taken forward in a streamlined way: this means bringing different ideas and sources of expertise together in ways that avoid distracting those who are involved in dealing directly with the current challenges. The Ebola Envoy’s team will catalyse such mechanisms.

The Chair summarized progress on the **deliverables** that were requested in the third GERC call (October 24th 2014). On **finances for the response**, the latest position has been shared: it is a considered view of the latest financial position. A draft of the **Ebola Response Dashboard** was shared: this is designed to help all concerned to focus on implementation issues. Means for improvements to **messaging and strengthened communications** have been examined by several within the Coalition: a system – designed to be of use to all in the Coalition – will shortly be established.

In the **coming week** the Ebola Envoy Team will share more information on: i) the UNMEER operational framework, which would be an important point of reference for all; ii) proposals for how best to embrace new ideas for innovation and coordinate follow-up; and iii) a process to improve the clarity and credibility of messages and enhance their communication.

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