

Remarks by Dr. David Nabarro, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Ebola, to Security Council debate "Peace and Security in Africa: Ebola", New York, 21 November 2014

Madam President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Two months ago, the Council adopted Resolution 2177. It was a memorable day.

Why? For two reasons.

We were aware that the outbreak was advancing rapidly and the need for an urgent response. And the Council responded.

Today I memorable too.

Why? Two reasons.

Hope and fear.

Hope, because the signs are good in Liberia.

Fear, because this virus is unforgiving.

Any complacency and it will punish us.

I thank the Security Council for its continued attention to the current Ebola outbreak and its consequences.

Since we last met, much has happened.

The response capabilities available to national and local authorities have expanded substantially.

The UN system's Mission for Ebola Emergency Response is coordinating support for national responses and increasing capacity in Districts, Counties and Prefectures.

The degree to which societies are engaged in the response has deepened.

When societies take responsibility for responding and partners align their support, authorities are able to react rapidly and effectively.

We are seeing that, where the response strategy is implemented fully, transmission is decreasing.

While the total number of cases continues to rise, the overall rate of increase really has begun to slow.

This is a good sign.

But results are uneven among and within the affected countries, and we are seeing quite a lot of variation.

But we are seeing the curve bending in enough places to give us the hope described at the beginning.

Because transmission is still intense and rapid in many locations, and because the outbreak has spread geographically, we realize we have a lot more to do.

We see hotspots in northern Guinea and western Sierra Leone and a new chain of transmission in Mali.

We must remain vigilant and persevere with a flexible and well-adapted response.

If we take our eye off the ball, case numbers will climb again... and we will all count the cost.

This outbreak – and the threat it poses to the region and the world – will not be over until the last case is identified, isolated and under treatment.

Madam President,

The primary credit for progress in the fight against Ebola goes to the communities that have made difficult decisions to abandon generations of traditional practices.

Social mobilization has been the key to success – from safe burial of those who have died and caring for the sick to limiting physical contact and improving hygiene.

Good medical care is also critical.

That means Ebola treatment units and community care centres staffed by health personnel who know how to treat Ebola.

It means quicker identification of cases, as well as rapid contact tracing and follow up.

Where these ingredients are present, the rate of transmission slows.

But where they are absent, communities remain vulnerable.

And the fact is that too many communities remain vulnerable.

Madam President,

As this Council has emphasized, Ebola is not just an urgent public health crisis. It is a complex emergency.

Ebola – and the fear and stigma it creates -- have affected health provision, education, food security, trade and economic well-being.

We encourage all engaged in the response to align their support so that authorities can promote resilience, can repair damage and can hasten recovery.

And that recovery does start now, beginning with the restoration of essential services.

And in the longer term, we must also help the affected countries to build back better so they are able to prevent future health crises.

The members of this Council and UN Member States are already showing solidarity and generosity in providing financial material assistance to the affected countries.

But winning this battle is going to require considerably more resources and effort.

We have met the initial short-term target for the Secretary-General's Multi-Partner Trust Fund of \$100 million dollars.

And we thank all who so generously contributed.

The money committed is being disbursed to fund critical programmes.

By the end of the year, we would like to see much more in the Fund to finance unfunded priorities.

Overall, we estimate that the UN system will need \$1.5 billion dollars through to March 2015 to assist with ending the outbreak.

Much has been committed, but there is a shortfall of over \$600 million dollars. And I am sure we will meet that shortfall.

The affected countries will also need funding of a similar magnitude for recovery.

Another immediate priority is for self-sufficient, staffed and equipped international responders, especially for Liberia and Guinea.

Again, Governments from Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe have been generous, but many more skilled health personnel are needed to provide assistance wherever it is most required – especially in remote districts.

We need to chase this virus down and root it out from its last hiding place.

This means breaking the chains of transmission by identifying and treating all cases and tracing their contacts so everyone in West Africa and beyond is safe.

Madam President,

The longer the Ebola outbreak continues, the greater the impact on the affected countries and greater the chance of it spreading to other nations.

The international community must maintain its urgent response.

First, we must mitigate the risk Ebola presents to health, development, peace and security by ending the outbreak as soon as possible.

Second, the response must work to maintain essential services, and preserve stability.

Third, starting to look at a focus on recovery and what that should involve.

As this Council knows well, strong systems and institutions are the foundation of peace and prosperity.

Let us do our utmost to ensure there are no more outbreaks like this one ever again.

Thank you.