

UNITED NATIONS



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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**REMARKS AT THE INTERNATIONAL EBOLA RECOVERY CONFERENCE  
New York, 10 July 2015**

Your Excellency, President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Chairman of the African Union,  
Your Excellency, Mr. Alpha Condé, President of Guinea,  
Your Excellency, Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia,  
Your Excellency, Mr. Ernest Bai Koroma, President of Sierra Leone,  
Madame Secretary-General of the Mano River Union, Dr. Saran Daraba Kabba,  
World Health Organization Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan,  
Distinguished heads and representatives of our partner institutions in this conference, the African Union, the African Development Bank, the European Union and the World Bank,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for taking part in this International Ebola Recovery Conference.

We have an important task before us: to back our pledges of solidarity with commitments of tangible action.

I ask that you join me in standing with the people of the Ebola-affected countries for the long haul.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking the many donors who have come together, along with governments, civil society organizations, national and international responders, development banks and foundations, as part of a broad-based global coalition to support the nationally-led response efforts.

I applaud the African Union and its plan to convene an International Conference on Africa's Fight against Ebola later this month in Malabo.

I commend the AU for galvanizing African leaders, businesses and communities in solidarity with the affected countries. This regional unity has been essential to bringing the outbreak under control – and will be critical to effective recovery. I commend the

more than 800 African volunteers who deployed through the AU Ebola support mechanism.

I also thank the countries that answered my call to send in logistical support, medical teams, crisis managers and aid for safe and dignified burials.

Thousands of women and men from within and outside the countries put their lives on the line to slow the advance of this disease.

Thanks to these partners – and too many others to name – we have come a long way in containing the outbreak.

The General Assembly took decisive action, endorsing the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response. I thank His Excellency Sam Kutesa, President of the General Assembly, for his continued leadership in keeping the membership seized with this issue.

As UNMEER prepares to close next month, the UN will maintain the dedicated high-level leadership under WHO together with the UN country teams, in its support to help the affected countries get to zero.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

The strategy to end the outbreak is working – but the final stretch of the response remains particularly challenging.

Cases in Guinea and Sierra Leone have been reduced considerably. The response is being fine-tuned to focus on increasing engagement, awareness and contact tracing in the remaining affected communities.

New cases in Liberia show the need for continued vigilance given the regional risks. The Liberian Government's proactive actions also underscore how the response strategy has effectively reinforced national capacities and knowledge to be activated for future outbreaks.

But the impacts of the Ebola crisis have been far-reaching and much work is needed to support the countries.

The outbreak has eroded progress on peace and development. It has disrupted health and social services.

Many major economic sectors have been affected: agriculture, mining, trade, tourism, transport, fisheries and livestock. The functioning of schools, hospitals and other public infrastructure has suffered.

All of these disruptions have had a negative impact on the economies of all three countries – which were, prior to the Ebola outbreak, on a positive growth trajectory.

This negative impact – on economies, livelihoods and more importantly lives – demands that the global community continues to prioritize recovery from Ebola even long after the crisis subsides. This will be essential to “stay at zero” in order to strengthen resilience to withstand future shocks.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Your continued generosity will help the affected countries carry out their plans for recovery over the next two years.

Our shared goal is to build back stronger, safer and more resilient capacities for prevention and response. That means access to health services everywhere – not just in capitals. It means health services equipped to not only respond to extraordinary outbreaks like Ebola, but to address malaria, cholera and other common ailments.

Investing in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia will yield global dividends in preventing local outbreaks from becoming national emergencies and regional pandemics.

That is why today is about more than speeches and pledges – it is a chance to forge a partnership for a better future – a future that is full of opportunity and free of Ebola.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Our task is also to learn from our shortcomings and translate the lessons learned from this crisis in building back better. To do anything less would compound the tragedy.

I particularly welcome WHO’s lessons learned process and its plans for reform. Just this week, WHO welcomed the report from the independent Ebola Interim Assessment Panel. WHO has indicated that it is already moving forward to implement a number of the Panel’s recommendations.

In addition, I have appointed a High-Level Panel on the Global Response to Health Crises, headed by His Excellency President Kikwete of the United Republic of Tanzania.

The Panel is now working on the pressing question of how to strengthen national and international systems to prevent and manage future health crises. I look forward to its recommendations.

More broadly, we have to learn from the Ebola outbreak responding to the crisis phase is not enough. With any outbreak, we have to do more than end the caseload. We must lay the foundation for true health security by going the extra distance – as we pledge today – to create strong health systems that can prevent any recurrence and withstand any future outbreak.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Presidents Condé, Koroma and Johnson Sirleaf have shown admirable statesmanship.

Thanks to your support, we can largely be proud of what we have achieved in responding to this unprecedented crisis.

Yet we cannot breathe a sigh of relief – instead, let us collectively take a deep breath and resolve to finish the job.

I call on you to be part of this historic push to end the Ebola outbreak in West Africa and support the leaders and people of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in returning to a path of sustainable development.

Together, let us jumpstart a robust recovery process over the next two years, and usher in a better future for generations to come.

Thank you.