

FOREWORD BY SECRETARY-GENERAL BAN KI-MOON



The Secretary-General with nurse Rebecca Johnson, a survivor of Ebola, on 19 December 2014, at the Ebola Treatment Unit PTS1 in Hastings, near Freetown, Sierra Leone.
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The West Africa Ebola outbreak has had profound economic, humanitarian, political and security dimensions. At least 20,500 people are known to have been infected; some 8,200 have died. The lives and livelihoods of the people of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone have been severely affected, and they have asked the world to come to their assistance.

This publication tells the story of how the world responded in 2014. It outlines the key steps needed to end transmission of the disease and promote the kind of recovery that leaves the affected countries more resilient and better prepared to address future shocks.

With essential coordination provided by the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), the United Nations system has had—and will continue to have—a prominent role in mobilizing and deploying funds and resources. It is one actor among many. *Making a Difference* reflects the diversity of the global coalition of governments, civil society organizations, development banks and philanthropic foundations that have committed to stop the spread of this cruel disease.

At the heart of the response are the governments and communities of the affected countries. Wherever they have received the material and financial support needed to stop the spread of the virus, the number of new cases has declined. Massive international support has been made available in record time. Assistance has been forthcoming from all regions, but I would particularly like to highlight the solidarity shown by African nations that have heeded the call of the African Union to send volunteers.

Thanks to these efforts, we are now seeing the outbreak evolve into multiple distinct centres of infection, each with its own character and corresponding needs. The global response is evolving accordingly, adjusting so that the right combination of resources reaches people in remote rural settings, densely populated urban centres and locations situated close to national borders. This second phase of the response is designed to consolidate progress and increase intensity in areas where transmission is greatest. The goal is to track down Ebola and care for people who are infected until there are no cases anywhere.

Reaching zero cases and enabling durable social and economic recovery will require sustained commitment from a global coalition of supporters throughout 2015. The commitment must be maintained for however long it takes for success to be achieved. To this end, the World Health Organization and the entire United Nations system will continue to work closely and resolutely with the affected governments and all partners in the global response.

As I said when I visited the region in December last year, the United Nations has stood with the people of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone for years in their quest for development and peace. We continue as a close partner now in their hour of extreme need. We are working together to end this crisis quickly and safely. We would like to be sure that those affected never have to endure such hardship again. And by heeding lessons learned from this outbreak, and strengthening public health everywhere, we can make the world a safer place for all.