



INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

International Ebola Recovery Conference

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UNHQ New York

*Contributions made by the IAEA during the emergency phase of the Ebola response, and
future IAEA engagement in the recovery effort*

Thank you. My name is Michel Warnau, and I am representing the International Atomic Energy Agency, presenting specifically the work of our technical cooperation programme, which provides support to Member States in the peaceful application of nuclear technology. Such support is delivered through fellowships and scientific visits, training courses, workshops and meetings, expert assistance, and the provision of equipment and materials.

Following the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa in 2014, the IAEA provided immediate short term assistance to affected countries to support the use of a nuclear-derived diagnostic technique for rapid identification of the Ebola virus. This technique – known as reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction, or RT-PCR – is one of the fastest and most effective diagnostic techniques used to identify the Ebola virus and diagnose the disease in humans. The IAEA provided immediate assistance in the form of equipment, consumables and technical advice, to augment the limited capacities of the Ebola-affected countries.

The IAEA subsequently mobilized some 2.5 million USD to strengthen diagnostic capacities in the Africa region. The aim of the project – which is ongoing – is to improve national and regional preparedness, by strengthening capacities for monitoring Ebola virus in wildlife and livestock. This enables better anticipation of risks of future Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreaks in the human populations, which in turn facilitates the prompt implementation of appropriate preventive and control measures. The project is not restricted to Ebola – it focusses on the Animal/Human Interface and also addresses other dangerous zoonotic diseases such as Marburg fever, Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever, and highly pathogenic

avian influenza. A first expert meeting of 20 international experts from a range of specialist organizations was held in Uganda at the end of February to agree on the plan of action. A regional training event on the essential topic of biosafety and biosecurity will be held in Cameroon in August this year.

All activities are coordinated closely with WHO-AFRO and FAO, to ensure that our activities are in line with their recommendations and regional strategies.

The projects have received strong support from our partners, including U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), South African National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), Japanese National Institute of Infectious Diseases (NIID), and the Pasteur Network, etc.

In March 2015 our Member States approved further assistance to establish early warning systems and strengthen existing national and regional networks in Africa for data reporting, information sharing and decision-making. This support is going to enhance and to sustain disease control and management in the region as a whole.

I would like to add that our expertise in identifying outbreaks of zoonotic disease and our capacity to respond quickly through our technical cooperation mechanism was recently demonstrated in the context of the current outbreak of H5N1 avian influenza in West Africa. An IAEA expert mission in Cote d'Ivoire led to the confirmation of the occurrence of an H5N1 outbreak in the country on 28 May 2015. As a result, several Member States have already requested IAEA support to strengthen their capacities in diagnosing H5N1. Assistance is already organized in the priority countries – we will field expert missions in the coming weeks to train the national veterinary laboratories in diagnosing H5N1 using RT-PCR and will deliver emergency tests kits for about 500 tests.

The Agency is committed to contributing to the coordinated efforts of the UN family to combat Ebola and other zoonotic diseases.

Thank you.