

UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) External Situation Report

28 October 2014

HIGHLIGHTS

- The UN Secretary-General expressed his concern at the imposition of restrictions applying to healthcare workers who have travelled to the most affected countries.
- UNMEER ECM's for Guinea and Sierra Leone met with the US Ambassador to the United Nations to discuss the Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak response and underscored the criticality of concerted action to bring the crisis under control.
- UNMEER, in cooperation with the Logistics Cluster, air-lifted 1,050 kg of personal protective equipment (PPE) and body bags from Monrovia to Mali in response to the first confirmed case of EVD in that country.
- UNMEER has commenced the first regular Conakry-Freetown-Monrovia-Accra flight.

Key Political and Economic Developments

1. The UN Secretary-General expressed his concern at the recent restrictions put in place in several countries and localities applying to people who have travelled to the most affected countries. These restrictions have put particular pressure on health care workers and those who are on the frontline of the EVD response. The Secretary-General stressed that returning health workers are exceptional people who are giving of themselves for humanity. They should not be subjected to restrictions that are not based on science. Those who develop infections should be supported, not stigmatized. The Secretary-General reiterated that the best way for any country to protect itself from EVD is to stop the outbreak at its source in West Africa. This requires considerable international health care worker support and in return for this support, we have an obligation to look after them.
2. The UNMEER Ebola Crisis Manager (ECM) for Guinea, Marcel Rudasingwa, met with US Ambassador to the UN, Samantha Power. The ECM briefed on UNMEER's main lines of activity and outlined its plan to achieve these objectives. The ECM emphasized that UNMEER's priority was to align its support to the Government's national plan to ensure a coherent and effective response. Ambassador Power underlined the importance of ensuring that the UN's work was based on comparative advantages. The ECM also met with the British Ambassador and the EU High Level Mission on Ebola to brief on the UNMEER operational plan. The EU delegation expressed strong support for UNMEER and reiterated the importance of harmonization of activities undertaken by partners. The ECM met with President Condé and partners to discuss the finalization of a global operational plan for Guinea. The President also requested information from partners on key implementers, activities underway and a clear timeline on deliverables.
3. The UNMEER ECM for Sierra Leone, Amadu Kamara, and UN Ebola response lead agencies met with US Ambassador to the UN, Samantha Power, in Freetown to discuss ongoing Ebola response efforts and gaps. This coincided with the movement of the National Ebola Response Centre to the premises of the former Special Court for Sierra Leone, to be co-located with UNMEER, the UK military involved in EVD response, and pillar leads.

Medical

4. One of the Cuban volunteers who went to Guinea as part of the medical team sent to assist with the EVD epidemic passed away on Sunday of malaria with cerebral complications.
5. US Federal health authorities released a new set of guidelines for checking people who arrive for signs of EVD. The guidelines establish four categories of travellers based on risk, the highest being someone who provided direct care to an Ebola patient and the lowest being someone who had no direct exposure but traveled to one of the affected countries. Mandatory quarantines or other types of isolation are not part of the guidelines unless travelers have symptoms or request quarantine.

6. Australia has temporarily stopped processing visas for people from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in an attempt to prevent the spread of the EVD to Australia. Temporary visas already granted to people from these three countries that have not yet departed for Australia would also be cancelled. Permanent visa holders from these countries will have to spend 21 days in quarantine before entering Australia.
7. New Jersey Governor Chris Christie has followed New York Governor Andrew Cuomo and announced that returning medical workers from the three worst affected countries would be quarantined at home. A New Jersey nurse, who became the first person quarantined at a hospital under the new rule, will be flown to her home in Main.
8. The US Army has isolated a dozen soldiers returning from the affected countries at a base in Italy, including the general who oversaw the military's initial response to the EVD outbreak.

Logistics

9. UNMEER, in cooperation with the Logistics Cluster, air-lifted 1,050 kg of PPE and body bags from Monrovia to Mali in response to the first confirmed case of EVD in that country.
10. WFP is establishing the primary supply network from main ports and international airports in the affected countries. So far, all staging areas and main hubs in or near capitals are operational. Additionally, 8 forward logistics bases (to give closer access to the field) are also operational.
11. UNMEER has assisted the movement of seven dedicated air assets (helicopters and fixed wing aircraft) into the region. An air coordination cell has also been established at UNICEF's HQ in Copenhagen. The cell will provide visibility on incoming flights to the region, maximize usage of strategic airlifts, and coordinate the use of air space. Since 26 August a total of 31 flights carrying 1,345 MTs (logistics items, PPE and ambulances) have been flown to the affected countries.
12. UNMEER has commenced the first regular flight to Conakry-Freetown-Monrovia-Accra, using a CRJ-200 aircraft. UNMEER is also undertaking a reconnaissance flight to Bo, Liberia, to assess the runway and is deploying communications equipment (VSAT) to Conakry, which has been flown from Juba using a MONUSCO C-130.
13. A fifth Russian helicopter has now arrived in Sierra Leone from Russia. It will be assembled and inspected over the next 3 days. Three of the four that were delivered earlier are already operational.

Resource Mobilisation

14. The OCHA Ebola Virus Outbreak Overview of Needs and Requirements of USD 988 million has received USD 492 million, which is just under 50 per cent of the total ask.
15. The Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund currently has deposits of USD 8.8 million. In total USD 116 million has been pledged, surpassing the target of USD 100 million by end of October 2014.
16. All humanitarian partners, including donors and recipient agencies, are encouraged to inform OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (FTS - <http://fts.unocha.org>) of cash and in-kind contributions by e-mailing: fts@un.org.

Outreach and Education

17. Wikipedia's EVD article has had 17 million page views in the last month, almost as many as the US Centers for Disease Control Ebola portal and the WHO's Ebola fact sheet, as well as the Ebola coverage of prominent health care brands like WebMD and the Mayo Clinic.

Essential Services

18. The results of the WFP mobile vulnerability analysis mapping assessment show that in the most-affected areas of Guinea, EVD appears to have compounded an already precarious situation of chronic food insecurity. With harvests well underway, Guinea is entering the time of year when rural households should be consuming more. The country is also approaching the market period for cash crops, which, during normal times, leads to increased incomes in rural areas.
19. International Rescue Committee's president David Miliband says that people in the Ebola affected countries are scared to go to health centers because they think they might catch EVD. He said that the health systems in Liberia and neighboring Sierra Leone in particular have been almost shut down by EVD.
20. Efforts to contain malaria may be jeopardised by the strain on health services caused by the EVD crisis. Dr Fatoumata Nafo-Traoré, who heads the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, noted that in 2012

malaria killed 7,000 people in the three countries worst hit by EVD. Most of these were young children.

Upcoming Events

- 26-29 October US Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, travels to Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Ghana.
- 11 December - Global Compact CEO-level Action Pledge Event at the UN.