



PRESS RELEASE

OULD CHEIKH AHMED ARRIVED IN ACCRA TO OFFICIALLY TAKE OVER AS HEAD OF UN EBOLA MISSION

Accra, 3 January 2015 – Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed arrived in Accra this morning to officially begin his duties next week as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), taking over for Anthony Banbury. He arrived this morning in Accra, where the mission is headquartered.

In a town hall meeting with UNMEER staff, Ould Cheikh Ahmed praised the achievements of all Ebola response partners, but also noted challenges ahead.

“This is a global crisis. We definitely have a difficult time ahead of us, but we can achieve it,” said Ould Cheikh Ahmed. “We have no plan B, we have to get rid of this virus. This is within our reach, but we should not be complacent.”

According to the latest World Health Organization figures, there are 20,206 confirmed, probable or suspected cases of Ebola and 7,905 reported deaths.

“We need to keep going until we don’t have even one case, because even one case is too many,” he said. “The work ahead remains very hard but we really have no other choice.”

Outgoing Head Anthony Banbury welcomed Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, saying, “Even while we face a lot of hard work in the days, weeks and months ahead, it’s important to pause and think back to where we were when we started. There were predictions that there would be 1.4 million cases by now.”

Ould Cheikh Ahmed will be visiting Liberia and Sierra Leone next week, then Guinea shortly after, to reinforce UNMEER’s strategic priorities and see first-hand the Ebola response. He will be accompanied by UN Special Envoy on Ebola, Dr. David Nabarro.

With support from UNMEER and other partners, the three countries now have sufficient capacity to isolate and treat 100 percent of confirmed Ebola patients and enough burial teams to ensure safe and dignified burials for 100 percent of all deaths due to Ebola.

Before his new appointment, Ould Cheikh Ahmed served as Deputy Special Representative and Deputy Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). He brings more than 27 years of development and humanitarian assistance experience with the United Nations in Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

For more information:

United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER): www.un.org/ebolareponse
Fatoumata Lejeune-Kaba, UNMEER Spokesperson, Tel. +233 (0)54 010 8008; Email: lejeune@un.org
Twitter: [@UNMEER](https://twitter.com/UNMEER), [#EbolaResponse](https://twitter.com/EbolaResponse) | Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UNMEER>