

UNICEF-Liberia

Ebola Virus Disease: SitRep #19

23 April 2014

Key Points

- No new confirmed, probable or suspected cases have been reported by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) since the last SitRep. However, as part of an ongoing review of existing data, the National Task Force (NTF) on Health Emergencies retroactively added seven suspected cases and removed two Ebola-related deaths from the relevant totals.
- The total number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases currently stands at 34 (six confirmed, two probable and 26 suspected), while Ebola-related deaths stand at 11.
- Foya, Lofa County, remains the epicentre of the Ebola epidemic, although suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases have been reported in Lofa (11), Nimba (7), Bong (6), Margibi (4), Montserrado (3), Grand Gedeh (2) and Grand Cape Mount (1) Counties.
- UNICEF delivered various additional supplies for the isolation units currently under construction in Foya, Lofa County, and Monrovia, Montserrado County; 14,000 additional Ebola awareness posters for use in communications for development (C4D) activities in Lofa County; and two motorbikes for use by social mobilization field coordinators in Lofa County.
- The two UNICEF field coordinators and the 10 member interpersonal communication (IPC) team continue to raise awareness of Ebola in Lofa County via visits to border towns, mosques, churches, marketplaces and schools, as well as through meetings with key local and traditional leaders.
- UNICEF procured 15 megaphones for use by the MoHSW in raising awareness of Ebola in affected counties.
- UNICEF's estimated funding requirement for Ebola-related C4D, Health and WASH interventions stands at approximately US\$500,000 for the period from 21 March to 21 June. The funding gap remains US\$270,000.

Situation Overview

- As of today, the total number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases stands at 34, including six confirmed, two probable and 26 suspected; and Ebola-related deaths stands at 11.
 - Confirmed Ebola cases have been reported in Lofa (4) and Margibi (2) Counties.
 - Probable Ebola cases have been reported in Lofa (2) County.
 - Suspected Ebola cases have been reported in Nimba (7), Bong (6), Lofa (5), Montserrado (3), Margibi (2), Grand Gedeh (2) and Grand Cape Mount (1) Counties.
- Despite the changes to the official Ebola statistics, since the last UNICEF SitRep of 21 April, no new confirmed, probable or suspected Ebola cases have been reported by the MoHSW. The changes to the statistics are due to an ongoing review of the data by the MoHSW, the WHO and the US Center for Disease Control (CDC), which led to the addition of seven suspected Ebola cases¹ and the removal of two Ebola-related deaths from the related totals.²
- Foya, Lofa County, remains the epicentre of the Ebola epidemic, while Lofa and Margibi remain the counties of highest concern. The latter is due to the fact that all confirmed and probable cases reported to date have been in Lofa and Margibi Counties, with only suspected cases reported elsewhere.
- 192 Ebola contacts have been listed to date, of which 78 have completed their 21 days of follow-up, thus clearing them of Ebola. The majority of contacts currently under follow-up are in Lofa and Margibi counties.

¹ The seven suspected cases were added retroactively following deeper analysis of alleged cases that were not previously classified as "suspected".

² The deaths of the two patients who were diagnosed in Liberia but who died in Guinea were removed from the Liberia death toll.

- The family of the woman who died of Ebola in early April at Duside Hospital of Firestone Rubber Plantation, Margibi County, has completed their 21 days of follow up. The Chief Medical Officer, who is also the Deputy Minister of Health, and the Margibi County Health Team (CHT) met with the family today to assist with their reintegration into the local community.
- The family of the second woman who died of Ebola on 9 April at Duside Hospital of Firestone Rubber Plantation, Margibi County, remains resistant to fully cooperating with the CHT and hospital staff.
- A meeting was held today between Liberian and Guinean stakeholders to discuss Ebola, including reducing the risk of cross-border transmission between the two countries. The meeting was to take place in Macenta, Guinea. The Liberia delegation included the Lofa County Superintendent, county and district health officers and representatives from the WHO, CDC and MSF.

UNICEF Response

Through its Communications and Child Survival Sections, UNICEF continues to provide critical communications for development (C4D); water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); and health sector support to the national Ebola response. This work is performed in coordination with the relevant national committees and working groups: namely the Social Mobilization Committee of the NTF; the Case Management Committee of the NTF; and the WASH Working Group.

COMMUNICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT (C4D):

- UNICEF's two field coordinators and the 10 person team contracted from the IPC firm continue to engage intensively with communities in Foya, Voinjama, Kolahun and Zorzor Districts, Lofa County. Their collective outreach efforts have included regular attendance at the daily Ebola coordination meetings in Foya; visits to local communities, including border towns, mosques, churches, schools and marketplaces; and meetings with local and traditional leaders and community groups.
- UNICEF sent an additional 14,000 Ebola awareness posters to Lofa County to support C4D activities. The shipment included 7,000 copies each of the school and community-friendly posters developed by UNICEF last week. The field coordinators and IPC teams have begun distributing these materials to the CHT, partners like Samaritan's Purse and other stakeholders. Another 6,000 Ebola awareness posters (3,000 of each) will be sent to Margibi, Montserrado, Bong and Nimba Counties.
- UNICEF sent two motorbikes to Lofa County for use by the two field coordinators, who are based in Foya and Voinjama, respectively.
- UNICEF has procured 15 megaphones with batteries for use by the Social Mobilization Committee of the NTF in raising awareness of Ebola in Margibi, Lofa, Bong, Nimb and Montserrado Counties.
- All UNICEF-supported mass media activities are ongoing, including work with local community radio stations and key national stations. At the national level, these efforts are supported by UNMIL, which continues to carry the 30-minute Ebola talk show from 12:10 to 12:40 PM, Monday through Friday. The show is rebroadcast on UNMIL Radio an additional two times per day. It is also being carried by the Liberia Broadcasting System.

CHILD SURVIVAL (WASH AND HEALTH):

- UNICEF delivered the additional materials requested by MSF to Lofa County for use in the isolation unit at Foya Hospital, which is nearly complete.³ The supplies included plastic fencing, blankets and plastic chairs and tables and ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF). Additional requested supplies will be delivered on Friday, 25 April.
- UNICEF also delivered supplies to support the isolation unit at JFK Medical Center in Montserrado County. The supplies included plastic sheeting and RUTF. The agency will deliver additional supplies for the unit in the coming days.

³ The previous SitRep indicated the unit is complete and able to accept patients. However it is actually the temporary holding area of the hospital that is able to manage cases, as the isolation unit itself is not quite finished.

UNICEF Funding Needs:

- UNICEF’s estimated funding requirement for Ebola-related C4D, Health and WASH interventions remains approximately US\$500,000 for the period from 21 March to 21 June. The office has received the following support to date: US\$100,000 from the Japan National Committee for UNICEF; US\$100,000 from the US Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance/OFDA (provided through UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa); and US\$30,000 from the UK Department for International Development/DFID (re-programmed funding). The funding gap remains US\$270,000.

National Task Force Updates

BUDGET AND DONOR SUPPORT:

- The MoHSW’s three-month Ebola response budget still stands at US\$2.5 million. It covers all 15 counties in Liberia but prioritizes Lofa, Bong, Nimba, Margibi, Montserrado and Grand Cape Mount. The MoHSW may scale up efforts in Gbarpolu County, which borders Lofa, if needed.
- As previously reported, the Ministry of Finance has appropriated US\$250,000 for the budget, and the Mano River Union (MRU) has provided US\$10,000. These funds are currently earmarked to support coordination of the response, which is being led by the MoHSW.
- Many other partners and donors have provided support to the response plan and budget, though this support has primarily been in-kind.

LABORATORY AND EPIDEMIOLOGY:

- The Laboratory and Epidemiology Committee of the NTF is in the process of completing the training of seven technicians who will be sent to the field to assist in sample collection.

CASE MANAGEMENT AND PSYCHOSOCIAL:

- The isolation units at Foya Hospital in Lofa County and JFK Medical Center in Montserrado County are approximately 70% complete. The hospital in Foya and ELWA Hospital in Montserrado have created Ebola “holding areas” to manage cases until the isolation units are operational.
- The Case Management Committee of the NTF is continuing to train CHTs and hospital staff on case management, infection control and psychosocial support. The trainings have been completed in Margibi County and are now focused on Montserrado County. The intention is to create a “bank” of trained individuals who can be dispatched to other areas, including the Lofa border with Guinea, to train and inform health staff there. Meanwhile, the MoHSW, the WHO and Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) are working to create a training module for all viral hemorrhagic fevers that can be used to build the capacity of health staff even after the Ebola epidemic subsides.
- The WASH Working Group is contributing to the Case Management Committee’s efforts by facilitating procurement and delivery of WASH supplies, such as chlorine, as well as supporting WASH-related trainings for key health center staff. UNICEF has supported these efforts with supplies as well as funding to train staff in Nimba and Bong Counties on topics such as: preparing chlorine solutions at various concentrations for various purposes, proper burial of Ebola victims, etc. This support is complemented by WASH trainings by Global Communities/CHF International in Lofa County, as well as in certain areas of Bong and Nimba.

SOCIAL MOBILIZATION:

- In addition to UNICEF, many other partners continue to support efforts by the Social Mobilization Committee of the NTF. These include Samaritan’s Purse, Global Communities/CHF International, the Liberian National Red Cross, UNMIL, Plan-Liberia and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) (among others).
- ArcelorMittal iron ore mining company has also supported social mobilization efforts in Nimba, Grand Bassa and Montserrado Counties.

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL MANAGEMENT:

- The MoHSW remains the authority on Ebola statistics and continues to manage information via several channels and mechanisms, including: regular SitReps; periodic press releases; appearances on national radio and the UNMIL Radio-produced daily Ebola talk show; maintenance of Ebola Hotlines; and support for the press situation room at the Ministry HQ in Congotown, Monrovia. All material used for social mobilization for the outbreak should be cleared by the Ministry.

COORDINATION WITH CHTS, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND OTHER MINISTRIES:

- At the national-level, the various Committees of the NTF are meeting daily and often on weekends. Coordination meetings are also taking place on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.
- At the county-level, daily Task Force meetings are reportedly occurring in Lofa, Bong, Nimba, Margibi, Montserrado and Grand Cape Mount Counties, under the leadership of the respective County Superintendents.

UNICEF Contacts

- **Sheldon Yett, Representative**
Tel: +231-(0)770-25-7100 (office), +231-(0)770-26-7100 (mobile), Email: syett@unicef.org
- **Dr. Fazlul Haque, Deputy Representative**
Tel: +231-(0)770-25-7400 (office), +231-(0)770-26-7400 (mobile), Email: fhaque@unicef.org
- **Prabhu Prabhakaran, Resource Mobilization Specialist**
Tel: +231-(0)770-25-7103 (office), +231-(0)770-26-7103 (mobile), E-mail: pprabhakaran@unicef.org
- **Adolphus Scott, C4D Specialist**
Tel: +231-(0)770-25-7113 (office), +231-(0)770-26-7113 (mobile), E-mail: adscott@unicef.org