

## UNICEF-Liberia

### Ebola Viral Disease: SitRep #13

9 April 2014

#### Key Points

- The total number of suspected, probable and confirmed cases of Ebola now stands at 22, with 12-Ebola related deaths. The two additional deaths were added retroactively to the death toll and thus do not reflect overnight developments.
- The total number of confirmed Ebola cases stands at five.
- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf attended today's the daily meeting of the National Task Force (NTF) on Health Emergencies, where she thanked the group and reiterated her commitment to the Ebola response.
- Foya, Lofa County, remains the epicentre of the Ebola outbreak. However suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases have been reported in Lofa (7), Margibi (6), Bong (4), Nimba (3), Montserrado (1) and Grand Cape Mount (1) Counties.
- Together with UNMIL, UNICEF stepped up outreach efforts to schools via key government and NGO partners; finalized the MoHSW and WHO-approved Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) document for health workers; and committed to providing additional interpersonal communications support in Lofa County.
- So far, UNICEF has provided 7 cholera kits, 8 large tents to establish isolation units, 15,360 pieces of soap, 725 kg of chlorine, 20 spray cans, 100 basic family water kits, 4,830 boxes of disinfectant, over 9,200 buckets and 2,360 jerry cans and printed several communication materials.
- UNICEF's total, estimated funding requirement for Ebola-related Health, C4D and WASH interventions remains US\$ 478,036 for the next three months, and the estimated gap remains US\$ 344,676.

#### Visit by the President

Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf attended today's daily meeting of the NTF at the MoHSW, where she commended the Ministry for its response to the Ebola outbreak; thanked the NTF and all partners for their efforts to contain the virus; and assured attendees that she was committed to the MoHSW-led Ebola response. The President was joined by the Minister of Health, the US Ambassador to Liberia and the WHO Representative to Liberia, each of whom addressed attendees. Notably, the WHO Representative informed that the Government of Liberia (GoL) was eligible for funding from the African Public Health Emergency Fund, and that the GoL needed only to submit a formal proposal to access the funding.

#### Situation Overview

The daily meeting of the NTF re-commenced following the President's visit. During the meeting, staff from the MoHSW and key partners provided the following updates:

#### **SURVEILLANCE, VERIFICATION AND CASE MANAGEMENT:**

- Yesterday (8 April), the MoHSW added the woman who fell ill in Grand Cape Mount County to the total suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases. This woman recently travelled to Liberia from Guinea. Her caregiver is also under surveillance. A sample was taken from her and will be sent with several other samples to the international laboratory in Guéckédou, Guinea.
- The MoHSW also retroactively added two deaths that occurred early in the outbreak to the death toll. These persons were diagnosed with suspected Ebola in Liberia, but died in Guinea after crossing the border and had not been included in the death toll.
- With these additions, the total number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases now stands at 22, with 12 Ebola-related deaths. Total confirmed Ebola cases stands at five, all of which resulted in death.

- To date, suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases have been reported in Lofa (7), Margibi (6),<sup>1</sup> Bong (4), Nimba (3), Montserrado (1) and Grand Cape Mount (1) Counties. Foya, Lofa County, remains the epicentre of the Ebola outbreak, as well as the county with the highest number of related deaths.
- The team from the US Department of Defense-run Lassa fever laboratory in Kenema, Sierra Leone, will arrive in Liberia on Saturday (12 April), instead of today (9 April), as previously reported. The team will discuss the establishment of up to two labs in Liberia, including one in Lofa County.
- Three MSF-Brussels staff will arrive in Liberia today and will likely be dispatched to Foya, Lofa County, as early as tomorrow.
- The Case Management Committee of the NTF reviewed and finalized several case management tools and plans to visit JFK Medical Center in Monrovia, Montserrado County, today to assess their isolation areas. The Committee is also leading a training on Ebola today and tomorrow for JFK medical workers.
- Creation of isolation units nationwide is ongoing.
  - Many hospitals do not want to create isolation units inside their facilities; however, the MoHSW has advised that units be established within hospitals to avoid unnecessary construction costs.
  - The current isolation unit in Foya, Lofa County, has been deemed inadequate. Authorities have identified a structure that can be used as a new unit, but need tarps, cholera beds and other supplies to establish it. Samaritan's Purse is assisting the authorities in assessing the exact needs.
  - Hospitals and/or County Health Teams (CHTs) in Montserrado, Margibi, Bong and Grand Cape Mount Counties have identified spaces for use as an isolation units.
  - Disposal of biomedical waste is an issue of concern for the MoHSW, as most hospitals are not prepared to properly deal with this.

#### **BUDGET AND DONOR SUPPORT:**

- The GoL's revised Ebola response budget remains US\$2.175 million, though US\$99,000 may be added to renovate the cholera unit at JFK Medical Center in Monrovia into an Ebola isolation unit.
- During tomorrow's meeting, partners have been asked to assist the MoHSW in mapping their support.
- As mentioned earlier, the WHO Representative for Liberia informed that the GoL may be eligible for funding from the African Public Health Emergency Fund.

#### **INFORMATION AND REFERRAL MANAGEMENT:**

- The MoHSW remains the authority on Ebola statistics and continues to manage information via several channels and mechanisms. These include: Daily SitReps; periodic press releases; daily press briefings; appearances on national radio programmes and the UNMIL Radio-produced daily Ebola talk show; maintenance of Ebola Hotlines; and support for the newly-established press situation room at the Ministry HQ in Congotown, Monrovia.
- The Liberia Broadcasting System (LBS) is re-broadcasting the daily Ebola talk show.
- The Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism (MICAT) continues to work closely with the MoHSW, including through the holding of periodic press conferences.

#### **COORDINATION WITH COUNTY HEALTH TEAMS, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND OTHER MINISTRIES:**

- To improve coordination at the national-level, the MoHSW revised the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the NTF and its various committees and identified operation rooms at the Ministry HQ for each committee. These rooms are in addition to the previously identified situation and press rooms.
- At the county-level, daily coordination meetings are occurring in Lofa, Bong, Nimba, Margibi, Montserrado and Grand Cape Mount Counties, under the leadership of the respective County Superintendents; and case management training for health workers is ongoing in Lofa, Bong, Margibi and Montserrado. Nonetheless, the MoHSW continues to emphasize the need for greater support and coordination at the county level, especially in Lofa.
- The Psychosocial Committee of the NTF announced its plans to engage with the CHTs as well as district and community-level health workers to support Ebola victims and their families.

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<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that one of the suspected cases currently under treatment in Margibi County is linked to Foya, Lofa County, as the patient (a woman) reportedly travelled from Foya to Firestone Rubber Plantation. A sample from the patient is being sent to Guinea for testing.

- As mentioned, MICAT is working closely with the MoHSW. The Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD), the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Liberian National Police (LNP) and the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN) are also actively engaged in the response.

#### **COORDINATION WITH PARTNERS:**

- UNICEF continues to play key roles on the Health Promotion and WASH Committees of the NTF (see below for further details).
- Technical assistance is being provided by the WHO, Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI), MSF-Brussels, the US Center for Disease Control (CDC), the US Department of Defense Lassa fever laboratory in Sierra Leone, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the ArcelorMittal-sponsored Ebola expert from SOS International.
- Other key partners include UNFPA, UNMIL, UNHCR, USAID, Save the Children, Global Communities/CHF International, Plan-Liberia, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Concern Worldwide, the Liberian National Red Cross, Rebuilding Basic Health Services (RBHS), BRAC, Pentecostal Mission Unlimited (PMU), the Liberia Teacher Training Program (LTTP), Population Services International (PSI), Tiyatien/Last Mile Health, Catholic Relief Services (CRC), ChildFund, Crusaders for Peace and the Association of Liberian Professionals.

### **UNICEF Response**

#### **HEALTH AND COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT (C4D):**

- UNICEF conducted a one-day mission to Margibi and Bong Counties, where they met with county health officers and staff at two hospitals to assess the Ebola response; shared additional communications materials –flyers, posters, fact sheets and CDs – and a training manual with stakeholders in both counties; and formulated recommendations for further UNICEF interventions.
  - In terms of overall Ebola response, the mission found that coordination structures are fully functional in both counties; that UNICEF-developed C4D materials are being utilized; and that trainings for general Community Health Volunteers (gCHVs) are being held.
  - In terms of gaps, the mission found that additional personal protective equipment (PPEs) kits and additional messaging to dispel rumours of traditional “cures” are needed in both counties. To address the latter, UNICEF is developing new messages aimed at traditional leaders.
- Working with the MoE, the International Religious Council of Liberia (IRCL), UNMIL and other partners, UNICEF is stepping up its outreach to schools, churches and mosques.
- The SOP for health workers developed by UNICEF in collaboration with the MoHSW and WHO has been finalized and is being sent to print today (9 April).
- To assist the MoHSW in the epicentre of the outbreak, UNICEF is contracting a Liberian communications firm to increase interpersonal communications (IPC) in Lofa County, and is hiring two Communications Consultant that will be based in Lofa to monitor C4D initiatives.

#### **WASH:**

- UNICEF is participating in a two-day meeting of WASH Committee of the NTF today and tomorrow (9 and 1 April), at the MoHSW HQ in Congotown, Monrovia. Participants are focusing on developing a plan to provide WASH-related trainings to Ebola response workers, including a budget.

#### **UNICEF Funding Needs:**

- UNICEF’s total, estimated funding requirement for Ebola-related Health, C4D and WASH interventions remains US\$ 478,036 for the next three months, and the estimated gap remains US\$ 344,676.

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