UNICEF Liberia
Ebola Virus Disease: SitRep #44
4 August 2014

*This report provides an update on UNICEF’s response to the Ebola emergency in Liberia. All statistics, other than those related to UNICEF support, are from the SitReps issued by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) through the Ebola National Task Force.

Summary

- As of 2 August, the cumulative number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases reported during Outbreak #2 stood at 471; the total number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola deaths reported during Outbreak #2 stood at 257; and the total number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases reported among health care workers during both outbreaks stood at 60.²
- To date, confirmed Ebola cases have been reported in Bomi, Bong, Grand Cape Mount, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado and Nimba Counties, and a probable case was reported in Rivercess County.³
- The week of 27 July to 2 August saw a notable spike in Ebola cases and deaths, with 173 new suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases and 94 new suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola deaths reported during this period.
- The Presidents of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea launched a US$ 100 million Mano River Union (MRU) Ebola Action Plan at a special MRU Summit held in Guinea on 1 August. Swift removal of the bodies of deceased Ebola victims – both suspected and confirmed – remains a challenge to the Ebola response, though the Red Cross has stepped in to assist in some areas.
- Demonstrations, including violent demonstrations, by concerned community members in Ebola-affected areas continue to hamper the activities of burial and case investigation teams.
- UNICEF finalized the five-minute Ebola awareness video and is in the process of producing copies of the film for distribution to video clubs, religious institutions and other networks. The UNICEF outreach team in Nimba County conducted an Ebola Awareness Training of Trainers (ToT) for 12 zonal heads and trained 10 general Community Health Volunteers (gCHVs).
- UNICEF’s budget for the Ebola outbreak response is US$ 1.59 million for the period between March and September 2014. The funding gap is US$ 960,000.

Mano River Union Extraordinary Summit on Ebola

- On 1 August, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf joined her counterparts from Sierra Leone and Guinea in Conakry for a one-day extraordinary Summit of the Mano River Union (MRU) to discuss Ebola.⁴ The leaders committed themselves to taking more stringent members to eradicate the disease and launched a US$ 100 million action plan aimed at stopping the outbreak in all three countries.

Situation Overview

- According to the MoHSW, between 23:00 on 30 July and 23:00 on 2 August (the date of the latest Ministry SitRep), 98 additional suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases and 41 additional suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola deaths were added to the cumulative totals in Liberia. Breakdown by County is as follows:
  - **Bong:** 11 suspected cases, three (3) probable cases and three (3) deaths.
  - **Grand Bassa:** One (1) probable case and one (1) death *(note that this is the same case).*
  - **Grand Cape Mount:** Three (3) confirmed cases and one (1) death.

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¹ Outbreak #2 began on 29 May.
² All statistics are drawn from MoHSW Ebola SitRep #79, which reports cumulative cases as of 23:00 on 2 August.
³ In the Highlights section at the end of the document, MoHSW Ebola SitRep #78 also reports that one probable Ebola case was recorded in Gbarpolu County. As this case was not included in the case totals and related tables, it has been omitted from this report.
⁴ As no Ebola cases have been reported there, Côte d’Ivoire – the fourth MRU member state – did not attend the Summit.
• Lofa: One (1) suspected case, 36 probable cases, nine (9) confirmed cases and 14 deaths.
• Margibi: Three (3) suspected cases and one (1) death.
• Montserrado: 12 probable cases, 15 confirmed cases and 19 deaths.
• Nimba: One (1) suspected, one (1) probable case, two (2) confirmed cases and two (2) deaths.

During the same period, 10 suspected Ebola cases in Montserrado County were removed from the cumulative totals. These cases were either reclassified as probable or confirmed, or were discarded following negative testing or review against the case definition.

• The additional cases and deaths include:
  - The first probable Ebola case and death in Grand Bassa County.
  - 34 probable cases from Barkedu in Lofa County, where Ebola cases and deaths were being hidden by the community for some time.
  - Four (4) new cases and one (1) new death among health care workers.
  - The first three (3) confirmed Ebola cases in Grand Cape Mount County (in addition to the probable case reported last week).

With these changes, the total number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases reported in Liberia during Outbreak #2 now stands at 471; the total number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola deaths stands at 257; and the case fatality rate for probable and confirmed cases stands at 60 per cent. Case breakdown by County is as follows:
  - Bomi: 16 probable and seven (7) confirmed.
  - Bong: 27 suspected, 16 probable and 10 confirmed.
  - Grand Bassa: One (1) probable.
  - Grand Cape Mount: One (1) probable and three (3) confirmed.
  - Lofa: 55 suspected, 121 probable and 63 confirmed.
  - Margibi: Five (5) suspected, two (2) probable and two (2) confirmed.
  - Montserrado: 17 suspected, 69 probable and 42 confirmed.
  - Nimba: Three (3) suspected, five (5) probable and five (5) confirmed.
  - Rivercess: One (1) probable.

The total number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases among health workers since the epidemic began stands at 60, of which 35 have resulted in death.

Confirmed Ebola cases have been reported in Bomi, Bong, Grand Cape Mount, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado and Nimba Counties, and one (1) probable case has been reported in Grand Bassa County.

Developments and Challenges

• The ETUs at Foya Borma Hospital in Lofa County and ELWA Hospital in Montserrado County remain overstretched, causing some Ebola patients to remain in their homes, or in temporary Ebola “holding spaces” established in some communities. The Case Management Sub-Committee of the Incident Management System is working with MSF to resolve these challenges. Since 1 August, the following actions have been taken:
  - MSF is expected to begin work today (4 August) on the expansion of the ETU at ELWA Hospital in Montserrado County from 20 to 60+ beds.
  - MSF team arrived on 3 August in Foya, Lofa County, where the NGO has taken on management of the ETU at Foya Borma Hospital. Additional MSF staff are expected to be deployed to the Hospital this week. As at ELWA, the team will also be extending the existing unit to accommodate more patients.

• Swift removal of the bodies of deceased Ebola victims – both suspected and confirmed – remains a challenge to the Ebola response. Constraints are linked to both limited capacity and resistance from communities.
  - To bolster capacity, the Red Cross has stepped in to assist in the removal and burial of deceased Ebola victims, although this assistance is limited to certain counties.
  - Some communities and/or households continue to deny burial teams access to bodies and to bury the bodies themselves. Other communities have protested the slow arrival of burial teams and have disposed of bodies themselves, while others are against the establishment of burial sites in their areas.

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5 All statistics are drawn from MoHSW Ebola SitRep #79, which reports cumulative cases as of 23:00 on 2 August.
Case investigation teams also continue to meet with resistance in some communities. For example, in Flahla and Suacoco in Bong County, residents have complained of “strange deaths” but have refused to allow the case investigation team in to assess the situation.

According to MoHSS, the friction between burial and case investigation teams and communities has led to demonstrations, some of which have turned violent, and at least one incident of armed threats against a team. Liberian security agencies have responded in a number of these cases, sometimes with stand-by police support from UNMIL.

**UNICEF Response**

As a member of the Ebola National Task Force, UNICEF continues to provide critical social mobilization/communications, case management/health and logistical support to the national response.

**SOCIAL MOBILIZATION/COMMUNICATIONS:**

- UNICEF has completed the five-minute Public Service Announcement-style video on Ebola. In the film, prominent Liberian citizens including the President deliver key messages about the disease. UNICEF will begin copying the film onto CDs for distribution through various networks, including partner organizations, video clubs nationwide and religious leaders. The agency will also upload the film on various web platforms so that it can also be viewed online, including on cell phone with internet access.
- UNICEF’s social mobilization team in Nimba County conducted a ToT on Ebola for 12 zonal heads, who will in turn train community volunteers in their zones. Ten (10) general Community Health Volunteers were also trained by the team.

**UNICEF Funding Needs:**

- UNICEF’s budget for the Ebola response from March to September 2014 is US$ 1.59 million. The following support has been provided to date: US$ 306,355 in approved funds from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF); US$ 100,000 from the Japan National Committee for UNICEF; US$100,000 from the US OFDA (provided through the UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa); US$ 30,000 from the UK Department for International Development (re-programmed funds); and US$ 93,000 from the UK Committee for UNICEF. The funding gap is US$ 960,000.

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