**UNICEF-Liberia**

**Ebola Virus Disease: SitRep #45**

**6 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 4 August, the cumulative number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases reported during Outbreak #2 stood at 508, reflecting an addition of 37 cases between 2 and 4 August. The total number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola deaths reported during Outbreak #2 stood at 271; and the total number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases reported among health care workers during both outbreaks stood at 63.
- To date, confirmed Ebola cases have been reported in Bomi, Bong, Grand Cape Mount (GCM), Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado and Nimba Counties, and probable cases have been reported in Grand Bassa Rivercess Counties.
- The majority of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases in Liberia are not in Ebola Treatment Units (ETUs). This is due in part to limited space in the two existing units, which are based in Foya, Lofa County, and Monrovia, Montserratado County, respectively; and the increasing geographic spread of the Ebola outbreak. MSF is working to expand the ETUs in Foya, Lofa County, and Monrovia, Montserratado County.
- To cope with suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola patients where ETUs do not exist, health authorities are reportedly establishing Ebola “holding” centres.
- Myths, misconceptions and denial linked to the Ebola virus; a lack of faith in clinics and hospitals; and gaps in the overall response system (from the management of Ebola hotlines to the deployment of burial and other teams) also continue to undermine efforts to stop the spread of the disease.
- To address these challenges, and in addition to previously provided support, UNICEF this week donated nine tents to the MoHSW for use in expanding the ETU at ELWA Hospital in Montserratado County, and ETU in Foya, and holding centre in Voinjama, Lofa; has also mapped out plans to deploy additional outreach workers to Bomi, Bong, Lofa and Nimba Counties; is printing 30,000 additional Ebola awareness posters; and is supporting a Training of Trainers (ToT) on Ebola outreach for 50 zonal heads and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) coordinators in Montserratado County on 7 August.
- UNICEF has significantly scaled up its Ebola response plan, which now covers the period from July to December. The total budget for this plan is US$ 6 million, and the current funding gap is US$ 5.0 million. Support is urgently needed to implement and sustain the plan in the medium- to long-term.

### Situation Overview

- According to the MoHSW, between 23:00 on 2 August and 23:00 on 4 August (the date of the latest Ministry SitRep), 37 additional suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases and 14 additional suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola deaths were added to the cumulative totals in Liberia. Breakdown by County is as follows:
  - **Bomi:** Four (4) suspected cases, two (2) probable cases and two (2) deaths.
  - **Bong:** Six (6) suspected cases.
  - **Lofa:** Two (2) suspected case, 10 probable cases, four (4) confirmed cases and nine (9) deaths.
  - **Montserratado:** Two (2) suspected cases, six (6) probable cases, one (1) confirmed cases and

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1 Outbreak #2 began on 29 May.
2 All statistics are drawn from MoHSW Ebola SitRep #81, which reports cumulative cases as of 23:00 on 4 August.
3 The last UNICEF SitRep (#44) omitted Grand Bassa from this list in the “Summary” section. This was an oversight, as the probable case in Grand Bassa was reported last week and thus should have been included.

Meanwhile, and as an update, according to MoHSW Ebola SitRep #81, there are currently no reported cases in Gbarpolu County.
With these changes, the total number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases reported in Liberia during Outbreak #2 now stands at 508; the total number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola deaths stands at 271; and the case fatality rate for probable and confirmed cases stands at 59 per cent. Case breakdown by County is as follows:

- Bomi: Four (4) suspected, 18 probable and seven (7) confirmed.
- Bong: 33 suspected, 16 probable and 10 confirmed.
- Grand Bassa: One (1) probable.
- GCM: One (1) probable and three (3) confirmed.
- Lofa: 57 suspected, 131 probable and 67 confirmed.
- Margibi: Five (5) suspected, two (2) probable and two (2) confirmed.
- Montserrado: 19 suspected, 75 probable and 43 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 now stands at 63, of which 32 have resulted in death.

Confirmed Ebola cases have been reported in Bomi, Bong, Grand Cape Mount, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado and Nimba Counties, and probable cases have been reported in Grand Bassa County and Rivercess Counties.

**Developments and Challenges**

- Limited space and increasing geographic spread of the Ebola outbreak is straining the two existing Ebola Treatment Units (ETUs) in Liberia.
  - Space in existing units: Currently, two ETUs exist in the country: one 20-bed unit at Foya Borma Hospital in Lofa County, and one 18-bed unit at ELWA Hospital in Montserrado County. According to the MoHSM SitRep of 4 August, 49 cases are being held in the units, which have a combined capacity of 38 beds. This means both units are at or above capacity.
  - Geographic spread of the virus: While the epicentres of the second Ebola outbreak remain Foya, Lofa County, and Monrovia, Montserrado County, confirmed and probable cases have also been reported in Bomi, Bong, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Margibi, Nimba and Rivercess. Currently, these counties have no ETUs. The ELWA ETU is intended to cover Margibi and other nearby counties, but with the number of cases reaching double digits in some of the newer counties, even the expansion of the ELWA ETU may not meet the needs.
- The space constraints at the ETUS in Foya Borma Hospital and ELWA Hospital will soon be eased as MSF is planning to expand them. UNICEF is assisting with provision of tents, beds and other equipment to support the expansion.
- To cope with cases in places where there are no ETUs, health authorities in some affected areas are reportedly establishing Ebola “holding” centres. Some Ebola cases are also self-isolating in their homes due to the lack of a facility in which they can receive treatment.
- Other major challenges to the Ebola response include myths and misconceptions about the virus; resistance to adoption of protective behaviours in some communities; inconsistency in the manning of the Ebola hotlines; reports of hospitals and clinics turning patients away due to fear among health care workers; and limited number, capacity and/or mobility of burial, case management and contact tracing teams, given the geographic spread of the disease. These issues have all been brought to the attention of the Ebola National Task Force, the Incident Management System and Ebola response partners, who are still working to develop effective solutions.
- With the number of cases, deaths and survivors rising, there is also a need for additional support for the Psychosocial Sub-Committee of the Incident Management System. This includes support for children affected by the outbreak.

**UNICEF Response**

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4 All statistics are drawn from MoHSM Ebola SitRep #81, which reports cumulative cases as of 23:00 on 4 August.

5 MoHSM Ebola SitRep #79 (the source for the last UNICEF SitRep) reported 35 deaths among health care workers. SitRep #81 reports 32. This may reflect further investigation of three (3) of the reported deaths, though the SitRep does not specify.
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:**
- To help address the challenges posed by myths, misconceptions and denial around Ebola, UNICEF has mapped out a revised and expanded social mobilization/communications for development (C4D) plan. This plan includes bolstering of outreach worker presence in Bomi, Bong, Lofa and Nimba Counties. Currently, each of these counties has two UNICEF-contracted outreach workers operating in it. In the coming days, an additional five (5) outreach workers will be deployed to each county, for a total strength of seven (7) per county (28 total). The team in each county will in turn recruit 10 volunteers from the communities to assist them, thereby increasing their strength to 17 workers and volunteers per county (68 total). These communicators complement the 100 “animators” UNICEF is supporting in Montserrado County and 24 animators in Nimba county.
- As a member of the Social Mobilization Sub-Committee of the Incident Management System, UNICEF is working with partners like the WHO, MSF and the US Center for Disease Control (CDC) to support a ToT on Ebola outreach for 50 zonal heads, WASH coordinators and other members of the Montserrat County Health Team. Once trained, these individuals will return to their zones and identify community members to serve as volunteer outreach workers. UNICEF plans to replicate this ToT model for other counties, where appropriate.
- UNICEF is also working with the WHO, MSF, the CDC and Global Communities to map partner coverage for social mobilization efforts on Ebola, countrywide. Once mapped, the agencies will work with the national Social Mobilization Sub-Committee to better coordinate outreach efforts.
- To support outreach by UNICEF communicators and all partners, UNICEF is also printing an additional 30,000 Ebola “Dos and Donts” posters.

**CASE MANAGEMENT/HEALTH:**
- To help address the capacity limitations of the ETUs, UNICEF donated an additional nine (9) tents to the MoHSW, 4 tents to support the expansion of the ETU at ELWA Hospital in Montserrado County, and 5 tents for ETU in Foya and holding Centre in Voinjama, Lofa county.

**UNICEF Funding Needs:**
- UNICEF is in urgent need of funding to support its response activities in Liberia in the medium- to long-term. The agency has significantly scaled up its response plan, which now covers the period from July to December. The total budget for this plan is US$ 6 million, and the current funding gap is US$ 5.0 million.

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