

## UNICEF-Liberia

### Ebola Virus Disease: SitRep #24

17 June 2014

#### Key Points

- The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) is now treating the new wave of Ebola cases as a second outbreak. All Ebola cases reported prior to 29 May are thus considered part of Outbreak #1, which started in late March and ended in mid-April; while all Ebola cases reported on or after 29 May are considered part of Outbreak #2.
- Since Outbreak #2 began on 29 May, 22 suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases have been reported in Liberia, including 14 in Lofa County and eight (8) in Montserrado County. This reflects an addition of six (6) new cases since the last UNICEF SitRep was issued on 13 June.
- Sixteen (16) Ebola-related deaths have been reported during Outbreak #2, including the death of the first child linked to Ebola in Liberia.
- The second outbreak remains confined to Lofa and Montserrado Counties, with epicentres in Foya and New Kru Town, respectively.
- UNICEF continues to work closely with the MoHSW as part of the National Task Force on Health Emergencies. UNICEF is working with partners to strengthen its interpersonal communications (IPC) outreach and has identified a total of 124 new animators and communicators to work with the affected communities in Lofa and Montserrado Counties. The agency has also provided some additional support such as megaphones to the IPC team contracted by UNICEF to work in Lofa County, and is working with MoHSW to distribute essential supply items and to provide logistical support that are needed for the Ebola response.
- UNICEF's estimated funding requirement for Ebola-related Communications for Development (C4D), Health and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) interventions stands at approximately US\$500,000. This figure may rise as the outbreak continues. The current funding gap remains US\$187,000.

#### Situation Overview and National Task Force Updates

##### **DISAGGREGATION OF DATA INTO TWO OUTBREAKS:**

- During an emergency meeting of the National Task Force on Saturday, 14 June, the WHO suggested that the MoHSW amend its SitRep to disaggregate Ebola data into two outbreaks. The justification for this change is that prior to the report of a suspected Ebola case in Foya, Lofa County, on 29 May<sup>1</sup>, more than 21 days had passed with no reported Ebola cases in Liberia. Twenty-one (21) days is the incubation period for the Ebola virus, after which a person can be considered Ebola-free. Thus, as of 29 May, all Ebola contacts from the initial wave had been declared Ebola-free, and the situation appeared to have stabilized.
- Based on this analysis, the MoHSW has decided to consider cases officially reported prior to 29 May as part of a first Ebola outbreak, and those reported from 29 May onward as part of a separate, second Ebola outbreak.

##### **UPDATE ON EBOLA OUTBREAK #2:**

- Since Outbreak #2 began on 29 May, 22 suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases have been reported in Liberia, including 14 cases in Lofa County and eight (8) cases in Montserrado County. The exact breakdown of cases is as follows:
  - Four (4) suspected cases in Lofa County;
  - Two (2) probable cases in Lofa County and four (4) probable cases in Montserrado County; and
  - Eight (8) confirmed cases in Lofa County and four (4) confirmed cases in Montserrado County.
- Sixteen (16) Ebola-related deaths have been reported in connection with the 22 cases, including eight (8) of the 14 patients in Lofa County and all eight (8) patients in Montserrado County. The latter includes the first child fatality connected to Ebola in Liberia. The child's case was classified as probable.

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<sup>1</sup> The patient was actually admitted into Foya Hospital on 23 May, however her case was not officially reported by the MoHSW until 29 May. Hence the use of that date as the starting point for Outbreak #2. See UNICEF SitRep #22 of 2 June for more details on this initial case.

- It will be recalled that during the first Ebola outbreak, a total of 12 cases were reported in Lofa, Montserrado, Nimba and Margibi Counties. The total number of Ebola cases reported in Liberia during both outbreaks officially stands at 33, and will likely increase to 34 shortly to encompass all new recent cases in Lofa and Montserrado Counties.
- During the first Ebola outbreak, Foya, Lofa County, was the epicentre. During this second Ebola outbreak, two epicentres appear to be emerging: Foya, Lofa County, and New Kru Town, Montserrado County.
- In response to the re-emergence of Ebola in Foya and the new outbreak in New Kru Town, the MoHSW has dispatched teams from its central office to both locations to assist county health authorities and sensitize the population.
  - In Foya, among other activities, the MoHSW has assisted county authorities and health workers in making and fulfilling requests for material and logistical support; has assisted with contact tracing; and has been in close consultation with the Foya Hospital regarding its needs.
  - In New Kru Town, the MoHSW and partners including the WHO Representative have visited Redemption Hospital and New Kru Town local and traditional leaders, and will continue to follow up with both groups.
    - Regarding the health workers, the team led by the Chief Medical Officer was able to dispel myths about Ebola and decrease fears following the death of a nurse from the hospital, who had treated one of the first Ebola patients. Members of the Case Management Committee of the National Task Force was also able to provide training to the health workers, and the MoHSW is considering requests for various material support. The workers, most of whom had abandoned the hospital following the death of their colleague, are now more prepared to return to the hospital.
    - Regarding the community leaders, the team was able to dispel myths and misunderstandings about Ebola, and to gain their support for further awareness and outreach efforts.
- The MoHSW is also following up on reports that the nurse from Redemption Hospital in new Kru Town who died of Ebola sought treatment at Duside Hospital near Firestone Rubber Plantation in Margibi County before passing away in Montserrado.
- A meeting of the Foya district chiefs, elders and traditional chiefs has been called by the paramount chief for this Thursday, 19 June; and the Government of Guinea has invited Liberia to a regional meeting on the Ebola outbreak this Friday, 20 June. The MoHSW is discussing attendance.

#### **CASE MANAGEMENT UPDATES:**

- The isolation unit at JFK Memorial Medical Center is now operational and can receive patients from Montserrado County.
- MSF is in discussion with the MoHSW about deploying an Ebola team to Liberia. The agency is currently stretched due to the outbreaks in Guinea and Sierra Leone, but has indicated it may send one doctor and one nurse to assist the MoHSW in Lofa County later this week. Another team to help with the response in Montserrado County may follow, though human resources must first be identified.

#### **UNICEF Response**

Through its Communications and Child Survival Sections, UNICEF continues to provide critical C4D, WASH and health sector support to the national Ebola response. This work is performed in coordination with the relevant National Task Force committees and working groups.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT (C4D):**

- Through its traditional WASH partners, UNICEF has identified three organizations capable of assisting with IPC in Montserrado County. These organizations will provide a total of 110 animators and communicators to assist in Ebola awareness-raising activities following a training that will be held this Thursday, 19 June. Meanwhile, UNMIL is working with about 160 persons divided into eight (8) groups, who are also conducting IPC in Montserrado.
- The 14-person IPC team contracted by UNICEF to work in Lofa County is also continuing its activities, as are social mobilizers working with Samaritan's Purse, the Liberian National Red Cross and other partners. UNICEF has provided its own team with rain gear and four megaphones to step up their and prepare for the rainy season. UNICEF is also working with partners to assess the needs for IPC in other border areas with Sierra Leone and Guinea.

- UNICEF is leading efforts to bring together all traditional, religious and media partners to scale up IPC, media and social mobilization activities at all levels. As part of this effort, UNICEF is leading the coordination of stakeholders on the Social Mobilization Committee of the National Task Force in order to ensure all partners carry out their responses in an organized, systematic and strategic way that avoids contradiction and overlaps. An orientation for these stakeholders will be held in Monrovia on Thursday, 19 June.

**CHILD SURVIVAL (WASH AND HEALTH):**

- UNICEF is working with the MoHSW to distribute essential supply items and to provide logistical support that are needed for the Ebola response.

**UNICEF Funding Needs:**

- UNICEF's current estimated funding requirement for Ebola-related C4D, Health and WASH interventions remains approximately US\$500,000. 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); US\$30,000 from the UK Department for International Development/DFID (re-programmed funding); and US\$83,000 from the UK Committee for UNICEF. The funding gap is US\$187,000. The County Office will likely revise funding requirements based the recent increase and spread of Ebola.

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