UNICEF-Liberia
Ebola Outbreak: SitRep # 9
3 April 2014

Key Points

- The official number of suspected and confirmed Ebola cases stands at 14, with six related deaths, and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) is investigating several unconfirmed reports.
- Additional samples from suspected cases are en route to the MSF-affiliated lab in Guékédou, Guinea, via Lofa County, Liberia.
- The Ebola Emergency Coordinator from MSF-Guinea arrived in Liberia yesterday (2 April) for a three-day visit to assess and advise the MoHSW on its response to the crisis.
- Deputy Minister of Health and UNICEF jointly assessed the possible sites of establishing isolation units in two hospital areas in Monrovia to prepare for future demand. They also assessed the Liberia National Drug Store to confirm stock and contents of cholera (Diarrhoea) kits prepositioned by UNICEF.

Situation Overview

At the daily meeting of the National Task Force (NTF) on Health Emergencies, relevant staff from the MoHSW and key partners provided the following updates:

SURVEILLANCE, VERIFICATION AND CASE MANAGEMENT:

- The official number of suspected and confirmed Ebola cases stands at 14, with six related deaths. However, as of this morning, the MoHSW was investigating several unconfirmed reports received in the last days. The number of cases confirmed by laboratory testing in Guinea remains stable at two.
- Additional lab samples drawn from patients suspected to have contracted Ebola are en route via Lofa County, Liberia, to the MSF-affiliated lab in Guékédou, Guinea, where they will be tested for the virus.
- The Ebola Emergency Coordinator from MSF arrived in Liberia yesterday (2 April) to assess the Ebola outbreak and response to date by the government and its partners.
  - The representative was due to visit Duside Hospital at Firestone Rubber Plantation in order to assess the situation there. It will be recalled that one of the two confirmed Ebola samples was drawn from a woman who, as of yesterday, was in isolation at the hospital.
  - The MSF representative brought with her one Ebola kit (containing mostly protective equipment for barrier nursing) and indicated that two additional (full Ebola) kits will be arriving from Europe on Sunday.
  - MSF also stressed the importance of procuring additional personal protective equipment (PPE) kits for Liberia; and training health workers and other key individuals.
- Lofa, Bong, Nimba, Margibi and Montserrado Counties remain the main counties of concern, as these are the counties where suspected cases and contacts have been reported.

BUDGET AND DONOR SUPPORT:

- UNHCR attended the NTF meeting today and indicated its willingness to contribute with tents and equipment.
- The MoHSW representatives at the NTF meeting committed to provide the list of overall partner support to date to Task Force members by tomorrow.
- DFID agreed to UNICEF’s request to reprogramme up to $25,000 from its regular contribution to the ongoing WASH programme, to meet the urgent needs due to the Ebola outbreak.

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1 Unconfirmed reports have been received by the MoHSW in areas around Monrovia, Montserrado County, however at the time of writing, the Ministry was not ready to confirm these cases.
2 Unconfirmed reports have been received by UNICEF that the woman who tested positive of Ebola and was in isolation at Duside Hospital at Firestone Rubber Plantation passed away from the disease yesterday, and that her child has come down with symptoms. As with the new suspected cases, the MoHSW was not ready to officially confirm this at the time of writing.
INFORMATION AND REFERRAL MANAGEMENT:

- MoHSW continues to issue regular press releases and to engage with media including UNMIL Radio to increase awareness and allay fears of the population.

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

- A representative from the Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD) suggested engaging a network of women traders with whom they work in Foya to raise awareness of Ebola. These women frequently cross the border to conduct trade with Guinea.

COORDINATION WITH PARTNERS:

- UNICEF continues to lead the Emergency Communications-Health Promotion Committee of the NTF and to provide critical support to the WASH Committee.
- UNHCR has offered to donate up to 10 tents and some other equipment. The agency is closely coordinating with UNICEF, which has released 5 additional tents today to be used to establish isolation units.
- Tiyatien/Last Mile Health, which has an especially strong presence in Grand Gedeh County, also attended today’s NTF meeting, indicating they may be able to provide some support to the response.
- Save the Children, Samaritan’s Purse, IRC, Global Communities, Liberian National Red Cross, Population Services International (PSI), Plan-Libera, BRAC, Pentecostal Mission Unlimited (PMU), Liberia Teacher Training Program (LTTP), USAID and UNFPA all continue to support the response. Concern Worldwide’s offer to support is still standing.
- WHO and Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) continue to provide technical and advisory support.

UNICEF Response

HEALTH AND COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT (C4D):

- UNICEF released 5 additional tents today for establishing isolation units.
- UNICEF’s C4D specialist, as chair of the Health Promotion Committee, met with the MSF representative to discuss messaging and the overall communications plan on Ebola.
- All other C4D activities – finalization of the Standard Operating Procedure document for health workers, revision of Ebola brochure, and translation of all existing documents into additional local languages – are ongoing.

WASH:

UNICEF agreed to support MOHSW to train environmental health officers in affected counties of Montserrado and Margibi on WASH-related interventions.

UNICEF Funding Requirements:

UNICEF’s funding requirement at the moment is estimated at $450,000 for WASH, Health and Communication for Development activities. This figure is likely to be revised in coming days.

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