UNICEF-Liberia
Ebola Virus Disease: SitRep #49
29 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

- According to the MoHSW, in the past week, 1,468 new suspected, probable and confirmed cases of Ebola were reported in Liberia – by far the largest number of cases reported in one week since the epidemic began in late March.
- With the additional cases, as of 27 August, the cumulative number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases reported during Outbreak #2 stood at 1,542; the total number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola deaths reported during Outbreak #2 stood at 856; and the total number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases reported among health care workers (HCWs) during both outbreaks stood at 137.
- Confirmed Ebola cases have now been reported in 10 of Liberia's 15 counties, and suspected Ebola cases have been reported in three additional Counties: Gbarpolu, Grand Gedeh and River Gee.
- The Ebola Treatment Units (ETUs) are at full capacity.
- Food and water are being supplied to quarantined communities, including by UNICEF.
- 500 additional beds in 5 ETUs are to be established in Monrovia.
- Over the past week, UNICEF airlifted 165 metric tonnes of health and hygiene supplies to Monrovia. The supplies, which were delivered via two separate airlifts, were procured with funding from the World Bank and USAID. They will be used by the MoHSW to support nationwide health facilities in the fight against Ebola. A third airlift with support from UPS brought in additional supplies on Friday 29 August. A fourth airlift is expected in the coming days.
- UNICEF also conducted Ebola awareness trainings for members of girls’ clubs, community leaders and NGO partners – in West Point and New Kru Town, Montserrado County. The agency also hosted a briefing and discussion session for NGO and UN partners conducting social mobilization across the country, with the goal of updating partners on Ebola messages being developed with the MoHSW, and promoting improved coordination and communication. UNICEF also set up water tanks with a total capacity of 5000 litres in a quarantined community in Monrovia.
- The total budget for UNICEF’s six-month Ebola response plan, which covers the period from July to December, is US$ 6 million. The current funding gap is US$ 4 million. This response plan is currently being revised given the latest developments. Support is urgently needed to implement and sustain the response in the medium- to long-term.

Situation Overview

- Over the past week, 468 new suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases and 243 additional Ebola deaths were reported in Liberia. Meanwhile, three suspected cases reported in Bomi County were removed from the totals.
  - The 468 new cases included the first suspected cases in Gbarpolu (one suspected case) and River Gee (five suspected cases) Counties; and 22 new suspected, probable and confirmed cases in health care workers.
  - The 243 additional deaths included 10 new deaths among health workers.

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1 “The past week” refers to the period from 20 August, the date of the last UNICEF Ebola SitRep, to 27 August, the date of the latest MoHSW Ebola SitRep.
2 Outbreak #2 began on 29 May.
3 All cumulative statistics are drawn from MoHSW Ebola SitRep #104, which reports cumulative cases as of 23:00 on 27 August.
Montserrado County reported the highest number of new cases (155), followed by Lofa (105), Margibi (97), Nimba (45), Grand Bassa (25) and Bong (20). The spike in Montserrado is partially explained by sudden reporting of backlogged cases.

With these changes, the total number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases reported in Liberia during Outbreak #2 now stands at 1,542 (446 suspected, 749 probable and 347 confirmed); the total number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola deaths stands at 856 (203 suspected, 334 probable and 319 confirmed); and the case fatality rate for probable and confirmed cases stands at 60 per cent.

The total number of suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases among health workers since the epidemic began now stands at 137, of which 71 have resulted in death.

To date, confirmed Ebola cases have been reported in 10 counties – Bomi, Bong, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Lofa, Margibi, Montserrado, Nimba, Rivercess and Sinoe Counties; and suspected cases have been reported in three additional counties – Gbarpolu, Grand Gedeh and River Gee.

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Figure 1: Ebola case and death trends as of 26 August 2014, based upon MoHSW Ebola SitReps.

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4 All statistics are drawn from MoHSW Ebola SitRep #97, which reports cumulative cases as of 23:00 on 20 August.
UNICEF Response

UNICEF continues to provide critical social mobilization/health promotion, case management/health and logistical support to the national response.

SOCIAL MOBILIZATION/HEALTH PROMOTION:

- Together with the MoHSW, UNICEF helped reactivate the Health Promotion (formerly Social Mobilization) Sub-Committee for the Ebola response, and increase coordination with national and international partners.
  - In the past two weeks, UNICEF has played a key role in finalizing revised Ebola messages, as well as training and awareness materials. This work is being done by the MoHSW and a core working group of partners that includes UNICEF, WHO, UNMIL, the US Center for Disease Control (CDC), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and Rebuilding Basic Health Services (RBHS).
  - In efforts to improve coordination with several international and national actors involved in social mobilization and health promotion activities, UNICEF also held a briefing and discussion session for 63 individuals from 40 NGO and UN partner organizations. During the briefing session, the latest version of the revised Ebola messages and training materials were presented to the partners, and partners briefed that all messaging/material are being finalized together with the MoHSW, and will be shared when completed. Feedback from the session was then shared with the messaging and materials working group. The session served to bring key partners who are not part of the working group together in an effort to promote harmonization of messages, as well as better communication and coordination in the future. UNICEF will continue to assist the MoHSW in national awareness efforts by serving as a liaison between the MoHSW, the Health Promotion Sub-Committee and these various partner groups.

- UNICEF held two trainings for 60 people from mostly partner organizations in West Point (40 people) and New Kru Town (20 people), Montserrado County. The trainings were provided as part of a wider effort through which UNICEF will seek to raise further awareness of Ebola signs, symptoms and ways of prevention in these communities where there is a high-risk of transmission. This project will be implemented through UNICEF-supported girls’ clubs in West Point and New Kru Town, via NGO partners Samaritan’s Purse and SHALOM. Leaders of the girls’ clubs; members of Samaritan’s Purse and SHALOM; and community leaders attended the trainings. In West Point, representatives from other groups planning to conduct outreach in the community also attended the training, so as to promote coordination of efforts and harmonization of messaging.

- The World Health Organization (WHO) deployed an Anthropologist who conducted a survey in Bong, Margibi and Montserrado Counties. Reports from findings show that almost all respondents to the survey, including in rural areas of the three counties, were aware of all the basic prevention messages. The report found that issues related to denial were still prevalent in some areas, while people also wanted information on what to do in case someone falls ill, in addition to calling the nationally published hotlines.

CASE MANAGEMENT/HEALTH:

- In the past week, UNICEF delivered 165 metric tons of medical and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) supplies to Liberia through two separate airlifts. These supplies were procured with the support of USAID (68 metric tons) and the World Bank (100 metric tons). They included 27 metric tons of concentrated chlorine, over 450,000 pairs of latex gloves, hundreds of sets of personal protective equipment (PPE), intravenous fluids, thermometers, syringes, oral rehydration salts and ready-to-use therapeutic food. The third flight with supplies arrived on Friday 29 August, while an additional airlift is scheduled to arrive in the next few days. In addition, UNICEF also began setting up water tanks with a total capacity of 5000 litres in a quarantined community in Monrovia in a bid to ensure the community had access to clean water.

CHILD PROTECTION

- UNICEF is beginning to implement a plan with the Social Welfare and Mental Health Departments of the MoHSW to assure psychosocial support to all children and families infected and affected by Ebola outbreak. With UNICEF funds, the MoHSW will hire an additional 60 Social Workers and 50 mental health workers to provide counselling and support to some 3,000 children and 2,000 families affected by Ebola.
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$ 4 million. This plan is being revised given the recent developments related to a steady increase in the number of Ebola cases.

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