



HIGHLIGHTS

- High-level meeting on Ebola held yesterday, in which global leaders showed solidarity with affected countries and a commitment to mobilize resources to combat the Ebola outbreak
- Common logistics hub in Monrovia becomes operational
- Influx of new pledges from Member States and organizations from the High-level meeting

Key Political and Economic Developments

1. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon convened a high-level meeting yesterday with more than two dozen world leaders, including the Presidents of the three affected countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone (the latter two of whom participated via video teleconference). This highly anticipated meeting allowed the international community to show solidarity with the affected countries and to mobilise a response in order to meet “the twenty-fold response surge that is required.” During his speech, the Secretary-General underscored the severity of the situation in which “health systems are buckling under the strain,” while paying tribute to the loss of lives of health workers courageously serving on the frontlines of the response effort. He also assured the affected countries that the entire UN system was mobilised and committed to playing a leading role in coordinating the response, under the operational lead provided by the United Nations Missions for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER).
2. In the same statement, the Secretary-General noted that this crisis had highlighted the need to strengthen early identification systems and early action. He proposed the consideration of whether the world needs standby capacity of medical professionals, backed by the expertise of the WHO and the logistical capacity of the UN.
3. During the high-level meeting on Ebola, the WHO’s Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan illustrated the perspective on the ground, in which patients are being turned away from overflowing treatment centres, while in some areas they are without treatment facilities altogether. However, there is also a need “to complement Ebola treatment centres with community-based care, making this as safe and culturally acceptable as possible” in a situation that the Director-General warned “we should expect ... to get worse before getting better.”
4. At the same meeting, U.S. President Barack Obama reiterated the growing threat that Ebola poses to regional and global security, cautioning, “there is still a significant gap between where we are and where we need to be.” Although progress has been made, President Obama emphasised the need for international organisations to move faster to “cut through red tape and mobilise partners on the ground.” He called on other nations to step up their assistance to join the U.S. and not to sit idly by.
5. Meanwhile, President John Dramani Mahama of Ghana called for a sustained, coordinated international effort to stem the outbreak of EVD, which he referred to as a “disease of isolation.” In a bilateral meeting with the Secretary-General later that day, the Secretary-General thanked Ghana for its leadership in the fight against EVD in West Africa and for its agreement to host UNMEER.
6. During the press stakeout following the high-level event, Dr. Chan noted that action to combat Ebola must be accompanied by speed, efficiency and impact and acknowledged the importance of avoiding bringing the entire continent into a meltdown. Dr. Nabarro said, “People must be at the centre of the response.” Finally, in an update on UNMEER, SRSG Banbury told the press that “we are moving ahead with all possible speed,” with two million sets of personal protective gear, 470 trucks, up to 18 helicopters and other aircraft on the ground to coordinate the response to the outbreak. Finally, Sierra Leonean actor Idris Elba noted that, while it was not a good day for Ebola overall, it was a good day to fight against Ebola.
7. On Thursday, the G-7 Foreign Ministers issued a joint statement pledging to keep open air and maritime links with Ebola affected countries, given that the provision of assistance was dependent on unhindered access to the countries concerned. Of particular significance was the commitment of the G-7 “to coordinate capabilities and resources to help to ensure appropriate treatment locally, as well as for airborne medical evacuation and hospitalisation of infected international health care workers.”
8. Also Wednesday, the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States issued a press release on its regular meeting in which the Pan American Health Organization reported on several issues, including “the international response [which] is being overcome” by the rapidly deteriorating situation generated by Ebola.

Human Rights

9. Late Wednesday evening, Sierra Leone authorized a quarantine of around 1.2 million people with immediate effect in the northern districts of Port Loko and Bombali, and the southern district of Moyamba, in the largest open-ended lockdown in the Ebola outbreak to date. With the eastern districts of Kenema and Kailahun already under quarantine since the beginning of August, more than a third of the population of six million is unable to move freely. President Koroma told the nation in a televised address that “the isolation of districts and chiefdoms will definitely pose great difficulty but the lives of everyone and the survival of our country takes precedence over these difficulties.”
10. There was media interest yesterday in the implications of the Ebola outbreak on the upcoming annual hajj, in which close to two million pilgrims from around the world are expected to converge in Saudi Arabia from early October. Saudi Arabia is reportedly denying pilgrims from the three West African nations hardest-hit by Ebola – Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, while every hajj visitor will reportedly be given a health-screening card that asks whether the traveller has been to an Ebola-infected country or had contact with an Ebola patient.

Medical

11. Yesterday, UNICEF announced that a batch of 9,000 household protection kits arrived in Monrovia on Wednesday, marking the first of 50,000 kits planned for distribution. The kits will be given to families to enable caregivers to look after Ebola sufferers as safely as possible, therefore filling a critical gap left by the limited capacity of the country’s dedicated ETUs. UNICEF’s partners, in coordination with the Liberian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and USAID, will distribute the initial 9,000 kits to the five counties with the highest rates of Ebola in the coming weeks.
12. In Sierra Leone, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) faces a shortage of ambulances to transport patients, due to the large number of them coming from Makeni to Kailahun.
13. In a follow-up to the repatriation of a Spanish Catholic priest in Sierra Leone who tested positive for EVD, media reported that he died in Spain yesterday.

Logistics

14. Further to earlier reports, WFP advised that the common logistics hub in Monrovia became operational yesterday as planned. With over 700 square metres of storage capacity, the hub will manage, dispatch and track health stock required for the ETUs and other delivery points. In addition, 18 Mobile Storage Units have been provided by the Logistics Cluster in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea to relevant Ministries of Health, WHO, Save the Children and MSF for urgent use in ETUs and transit centres. According to WFP’s most recent update, over 900 cubic metres of inter-agency cargo including PPE kits, thermometers, and chlorine, has been transported to the three most-affected countries on behalf of Logistics Cluster partners, including USAID/OFDA, JICA, Save the Children Fund, Clinton Foundation, Ministry of Health, and WHO, among others; a further 615 cubic metres of vital humanitarian supplies have also been stored on behalf of Logistics Cluster partners.
15. Previously mentioned logistical constraints being raised by UN actors and partners are being reiterated by national governments. The Liberian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare stressed that the deplorable road conditions are posing challenges for the transfer of cases in Tapitta, Nimba County, as well as the delivery of food items provided by WFP in Grand Cru County.
16. With regards to U.S. support, on Wednesday, a Defense Department spokesperson informed that approximately 100 personnel are currently in Monrovia conducting activities in support of the joint forces command. The first flights carrying parts of a 25-bed field hospital that will be used to treat infected health care workers are expected to start arriving early next week; once all the parts arrive, the hospital should be set up within about 10 days and will be staffed by personnel from the U.S. Public Health Service. Meanwhile, President Obama noted during his speech yesterday that the U.S. was currently working with Senegal to stand up an air bridge to transport health workers and medical supplies into West Africa more expeditiously.

Resource Mobilisation

17. Yesterday’s General Assembly Session attracted numerous new pledges from across the international community, including USD 5 million by the Republic of Korea, USD 25 million to the WHO and NGOs by Germany, an additional USD 40 million from Japan, USD 1 million from Cote d’Ivoire, USD 1 million from Timor-Leste, USD 1 million from Namibia, and USD 5 million from Nigeria. In addition, France stepped up its contribution, pledging 70 million Euro and support to medical evacuation arrangements in Guinea. Nigeria noted that it had 500 medical volunteers organized in teams who could be trained to for deployment. Meanwhile, South Africa noted that it would be providing a 40-bed field hospital, nearly 6,400 heavy duty personal protective equipment sets, ambulances and vehicles, in addition to lifting its travel ban on visitors from the affected region. Subsequently, India announced that it would make a USD 12 million contribution to the United

Nations trust fund to fight the Ebola virus. Previous symbolic contributions had been made by Colombia and Chile in the form of USD 100,000 each.

18. In response to the alarming evidence of the spread of EVD, the World Bank Group announced yesterday a further USD 170 million in new funding, raising its total financing for this crisis to USD 400 million. The new resources will be targeted at rapidly increasing the healthcare workforce and purchasing needed supplies for care and treatment to all parts of the affected countries.
19. Acknowledging the need to step up efforts, President of the European Commission José Manuel Durão Barroso announced yesterday that the European Commission would contribute an additional EUR 30 million (approximately USD 38 million) package for humanitarian aid to support the continuing efforts to overcome Ebola.
20. The Danish Prime Minister, Helle Thorning-Schmidt, announced that the Government will increase its contribution to the fight against Ebola with a further USD 6.83 million. Included in this contribution, was a Danish maritime transport capacity to enable the UN to deliver humanitarian equipment to the Ebola-affected communities in West Africa.
21. Also in New York, the Canadian International Development Minister Christian Paradis pledged CAD 30 million (approximately USD 27 million) to the UN and NGOs fighting the spread of Ebola. In announcing the Canadian contribution, the Minister stated, "Canada continues to be deeply concerned by the inadequate coordination efforts at the global level." Meanwhile, up to 1,000 doses of an experimental Ebola vaccine offered by Ottawa to the WHO last month are languishing at a Winnipeg lab due to unanswered logistical questions.
22. During his address to global leaders yesterday, South African President Jacob Zuma pledged to "continue to provide whatever resources at our disposal to assist the people and governments of our sister countries of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone." As a means of exposing the lack of infrastructure and limited resources in Africa, he shared his belief "that Ebola would have been contained within a few days had it been an outbreak in the developed world."
23. Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday granted an additional EUR 920,000 (almost USD 1.2 million) via the Finnish Red Cross for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent work to curb the Ebola epidemic. This brings Finland's humanitarian aid contribution for the EVD response to a total of EUR 1.7 million.
24. Further to previous mention of a call from Germany's Federal Minister of Defence for volunteers to join the fight against Ebola in West Africa, on Wednesday the Minister announced that 2,000 members of the Germany military have responded to the call for action. In addition, the country's first shipment of roughly 10 tons of supplies to tackle Ebola was reported to leave yesterday.

Essential Services

25. Further to recent concerns raised by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and others, Liberian Commerce and Industry Minister yesterday told the press that the country has secured imports of basic food staples until December, but the blow to its commodities industry driven by a mass exodus of staff may trigger a recession next year.