

GOARN Request for Assistance: Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak in West Africa

Date: 23 February 2015

Country: Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone

WHO Region: Africa (AFR)

Classification: Restricted - This request is for dissemination within GOARN partners and networks only.

Situation Update

The Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone is at a critical stage, requiring continued additional support at the national and sub-national levels in the affected countries. As of 20 February 2015, there have been 23,366 reported cases of EVD, with 9,437 reported deaths, this however is likely to be an under-reporting of actual cases and deaths. Transmission remains widespread in Sierra Leone with 74 confirmed cases and 68 deaths in the last week, and is most intense around the capital, Freetown, with other hotspots in Kambia and Port Loko. In Guinea the incidence rate has declined to 52 confirmed cases and 40 deaths in the last week. Most of the new cases reported by Guinea are in or around the capital, Conakry and the prefectures Coyah, Dubreka and especially Forecariah, which is adjacent to the Sierra Leone hotspots. In Liberia new cases are originating from one area in Montserrado county, with 5 confirmed cases and zero confirmed deaths in the week ending 15 Feb.

Engaging effectively with communities has been essential to successfully driving cases to zero but continues to present a challenge in several areas, with increased security incidents related to the Ebola response in many of the affected communities.

Situation reports and other information for each country are available on the WHO Ebola website <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/en/> and <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/situation-reports/en/>

Outbreak Response

The Ministries of Health in the affected countries have been responding to the outbreak in collaboration with WHO, and with the technical support of GOARN partners since March 2014. WHO and GOARN partners have been directly involved in field operations and have been providing continuous support to the response in critical areas, including mobile field laboratories, surveillance and field epidemiology, infection prevention and control (IPC), social mobilisation and anthropology, data management, clinical management of cases, communications and logistics. As of 23 February 2015, GOARN Operational Support Team has deployed over 530 experts from partner institutions. There are currently over 70 GOARN experts in the field, and 48 are being processed. WHO acknowledges the important and valuable contribution of GOARN partners in the response so far.

Request for Additional Assistance

In light of the complex challenges of the Phase 2 “Getting to Zero” in this outbreak, GOARN is issuing this further RFA to support the increased efforts that will be required for coordination, surveillance and effective contact tracing. Response activities and international support are expected to continue for several months.

Risk and need assessments have been conducted to determine critical priority and high-risk areas to focus immediate additional response activities. The ongoing support of GOARN partners in the Emerging and Dangerous Pathogens Laboratory Network (EDPLN) is ensuring that critical diagnostic capacity remains in place during this next phase of the outbreak response.

In order to further strengthen support at the prefecture, county, and district levels, we are requesting the assistance of GOARN partners to identify suitable experts for deployment to West Africa, in the following areas:

- Experienced field coordinators
 - Experienced field epidemiologists
 - Experienced data managers and analysts
 - Anthropology, community engagement and social mobilization experts
- Please submit initial offers of support to Dr. Vinod Srivastava, IEA Secretary, at vinods51@hotmail.com, with the initial information:
- CV of candidate(s), **clearly describing previous relevant field experience, especially in West Africa**
 - Area of expertise
 - Duration of availability (4-6 weeks minimum, excluding travel)
 - Dates of availability (actual dates preferred)

Staff to be deployed to Guinea MUST have suitable French language skills. In line with the usual GOARN procedures, WHO will cover the cost of travel and per diems (daily allowance) for staff deployed, but will not provide any remuneration (salary) for deployees.

However, given the extraordinary scale of the response, and the protracted timeframe for operations, in exceptional circumstances WHO will consider providing financial support to partner institutions to facilitate the deployment of experts, and contribute to the institutional costs of the deployment.

WHO and the GOARN Operational Support Team (OST) would like to express sincere gratitude and thank all of the colleagues and GOARN partners who have provided support since the start of this outbreak.

GOARN Operational Support Team

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