



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

FAO REGIONAL RESPONSE PROGRAMME WEST AFRICA

OCTOBER 2014 – SEPTEMBER 2015

EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE OUTBREAK



*"More is needed to address other consequences
of the outbreak including poverty, food insecurity, protection
and the costs of supporting the response."*

– David Nabarro,
Senior UN System Coordinator
for Ebola Virus Disease

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BACKGROUND

The outbreak of Ebola virus disease (EVD) has severely affected Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, resulting in tragic loss of life and adversely impacting agriculture and food security. The severity of the situation compelled the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 8 August 2014 and to release a response roadmap on 28 August. On 18 September 2014 the United Nations (UN) Security Council adopted Resolution 2177 (2014) urging immediate action and stressing the need for a UN coordinated response. On 21 September the Secretary-General established the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) to curb the spread of the disease.

The EVD outbreak has been **unprecedented in scale and geographical scope**. The outbreak is also proving to have a significant impact on security, economies and livelihoods in affected countries and across West Africa. A multidimensional and multisector approach is required to contain the outbreak and stabilize affected areas while safeguarding against a long-term food security crisis.

The Governments of the Republic of Guinea, the Republic of Liberia and the Republic of Sierra Leone have enacted prevention and control measures to respond to the outbreak, including the establishment of quarantine zones and movement restrictions. These measures have curtailed the movement of goods and services, including food items in the region, leading to panic buying, food shortages and significant price hikes. This season's crop harvest is starting, and the anticipated labour shortage is placing food and cash crop production at risk in affected areas. This is jeopardizing the food security of tens of thousands of people.

STRATEGY

The most urgent priority of FAO and all UN partners is stopping the epidemic and ending the tragic loss of life. Immediate action must also be taken to avoid a potential food security crisis. Therefore, FAO's strategy focuses on supporting life-saving activities while also safeguarding food security, nutrition and livelihoods.

FAO's strategy is based on four pillars:

- 1 Save lives by stopping the spread of the disease** as part of a UN coordinated response through social mobilization, training and awareness raising activities via FAO networks of extension services and animal health workers.
- 2 Boost incomes and agricultural production to safeguard livelihoods** through rapid impact assessments and support to crop and livestock production, cash transfers, post-harvest activities and trade/marketing.
- 3 Build resilience of communities to disease threats** by improving early warning systems and emergency response.
- 4 Strengthen coordination to improve response** by reinforcing food security/nutrition clusters and surge mechanisms.

FAO is appealing for a total of USD 30 million for its Regional Response Programme to assist nearly 90 000 farming households most affected by the outbreak in Guinea (8 000 households), Liberia (21 200 households) and Sierra Leone (58 182 households) over the next 12 months (October 2014 – September 2015)¹. At-risk countries will also benefit through FAO's integrated, long-term, regional approach to supporting food security and nutrition while reducing EVD risks at the interface between humans, animals and ecosystems.

¹ This programme is a living document, which will evolve with changing conditions of the outbreak, the results of the needs assessments and delivery of FAO actions. Therefore, the budget and activities will be reassessed upon the revision of this programme scheduled for December 2014.

COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

With some of the world's leading science-to-policy expertise in food security, sustainable agricultural production, forestry resource management, livestock production and animal health and disease ecology, FAO is uniquely positioned to develop and implement this plan of action in response to the EVD outbreak.

FAO brings together **technical expertise** in the areas of food security and safety, emergency response and capacity building, livestock policy and legislation, socio-economics, livelihoods, markets/trade, animal disease surveillance, wildlife and participatory development communication, data management and analysis. This combination of technical strengths and practical knowledge gives FAO a comparative advantage in responding to the far-reaching impacts of the epidemic through a unique, multidisciplinary and multisector perspective and approach.

Moreover, tackling this outbreak requires the national and international collaboration of all Ministries, including Agriculture, Health and Trade. As a neutral body of excellence and an impartial agency of the UN, FAO has **access to relevant stakeholders** working across the entire food chain from production to consumption (including government agencies, food enterprises, academia and consumers). FAO is well placed to develop appropriate policy and legislation, to identify innovative practices to address bush meat and wildlife issues and to implement best practices. FAO is equally well positioned to enhance national coordination between national veterinary services and ministry units dealing with wildlife, communication and public health. These connections enable FAO to help countries put in place effective, integrated approaches to disease management.

FAO also maintains strong **partnerships with the world's leading actors** in humanitarian and development assistance at international, regional and national levels. Partners include the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WHO, the West African Health Organization (WAHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academia. As part of the UN coordinated response to EVD, FAO will leverage its wide-ranging partnerships to involve the most effective actors for the most impactful assistance.

FAO incorporates **gender mainstreaming** into its development strategy and will promote a gender-sensitive response to EVD. Women are both key producers of food and actively participate in food trade. Gender concerns for women and men, boys and girls and persons living with disabilities and/or HIV will be specifically addressed from a human rights perspective on food and nutrition.

Accountability, transparency and results-based management are central to FAO's work, methodology and deliverables. FAO will develop key indicators for all proposed interventions, and the Organization will carry out results-based reporting and joint monitoring in collaboration with all parties involved in the implementation.

RESPONSE

1

SAVE LIVES BY STOPPING THE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE



Funding needs: USD 2.4 million

Output 1.1: Disease spread controlled in affected countries and prevented in at-risk countries

FAO will leverage its far-reaching networks of extension services, which serve as critical links for engaging in impactful, two-way communication that is sensitive to local customs and traditions in rural areas. FAO's efforts will focus on affected countries (i.e. Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) and countries at-risk of virus incursion. In close collaboration with UNICEF, WHO and other health stakeholders, FAO will contribute to social mobilization and communication-for-development efforts in order to raise awareness and improve knowledge, attitudes and practices vis-à-vis EVD. Particular attention will be paid to gender and youth dimensions.

FAO's specific social mobilization and risk communication activities on EVD will include:

- identifying and addressing risk factors with partners;
- mobilizing communities through Community Listener's Clubs, Farmer Field Schools, Livestock Field Schools, Animal Health Clubs and other networks;
- conducting sensitization trainings on best practices to mitigate the risk of infection;
- conducting trainings of trainers on raising EVD awareness and increasing food production;
- developing communication products (e.g. posters, banners, t-shirts, radio) in local languages;
- training local authorities, including animal surveillance staff, forestry authorities, farmer groups, forest users, women and youth groups on best practices to mitigate risk of infection by Ebola viruses; and
- training national authority audiences to augment understanding and empower national social mobilization work.

Output 1.2: Preparedness and response capacities improved at national and regional levels

FAO is already heavily engaged in promoting and supporting multisector preparedness to zoonotic diseases (e.g. highly pathogenic avian influenza) in partnership with OIE, WHO, international and national agencies, academia and other partners. FAO will assist affected countries and countries most at-risk in the region to improve capacities in emergency preparedness planning within the framework of the One Health approach².

In collaboration with WHO and WAHO, FAO will:

- assess preparedness and response capacities through cross-sector needs assessments;
- promote a comprehensive risk mitigation and response system to EVD and other high-threat diseases by facilitating the development and endorsement of key documents, including:
 - emergency preparedness plans;
 - response plans;
 - recovery plans; and
 - operations manuals;
- contribute to multisector field and desktop simulation exercises to test and review improved preparedness and response capacities.

² The One Health approach recognizes that the health of humans, animals and ecosystems are interconnected. It involves applying a coordinated, collaborative, multidisciplinary and cross-sector approach to address potential or existing risks that originate at the animal-human-ecosystems interface.

2

**BOOST INCOMES AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION
TO SAFEGUARD LIVELIHOODS****Funding needs: USD 22 million**

The most productive agricultural zones are also the areas most affected by the EVD outbreak. Due to quarantine measures, agricultural and livestock production cannot reach markets. Transport disruptions have led to excess of food in certain areas, resulting in high food waste, whilst other areas are facing food shortages. Farmers are facing the double challenge of conserving their production until markets are restored while simultaneously searching for a way to access the market to ensure their income.

The food security of vulnerable households in affected districts is already at risk. Loss of purchasing power and food price increases may force some households to resort to negative coping strategies in order to access food. Negative coping strategies could include smaller food intake, indebtedness and the sale of productive assets. These actions dramatically hamper livelihoods and create destitution.

FAO will support agricultural production in EVD affected and at-risk areas that will minimize the negative impacts of the outbreak and improve the nutritional status of the most vulnerable

populations while providing policy-makers with the latest analyses available so they can make informed decisions.

Output 2.1: Impacts assessed in affected and neighbouring countries

2.1.A. Identify and assess EVD impacts on agriculture, food security and livelihoods

Assessments on the impact of EVD on agriculture, food security and livelihoods are crucial to define the immediate support needed. FAO will implement:

- rapid, emergency assessments to identify direct impacts on agriculture and food security and to define immediate needs; and
- comprehensive assessments to understand medium- to longer-term impacts and to adapt FAO longer-term assistance to evolving country needs, including socio-economic issues (closure of borders, commercial ban of certain goods and products like bush meat).

Output 2.2: Food and nutrition security ensured or restored

2.2.A Support to crop production through the provision of key agricultural inputs

FAO will minimize the negative impacts of the outbreak and improve the nutritional status of the most vulnerable populations through the provision of agricultural inputs and technical advice to farming households (with an emphasis on women and youth). In particular, FAO will:

- distribute commercial and nutritive vegetable seeds³, cereal seeds (e.g. lowland rice and maize), leguminous seeds (e.g. groundnut, cowpeas) and cassava cuttings;
- stimulate contractual seed production to ensure availability of seeds for the next planting season and simultaneously provide income earning opportunities;
- support cash crops (e.g. palm oil, cocoa, rubber); and
- where manpower availability is affected, identify and enable the implementation of alternative methods (e.g. tractor rental for soil preparation and transport).

2.2.B. Post-harvest activities and marketing of agricultural production

To reduce the impact of restrictions on farmers and to enable in-country food availability, FAO will:

- ensure food conservation and reduction of post-harvest losses through the provision of community or household managed silos, cereal conditioning bags, conditional cash transfers and technical support;
- enhance in-country transformation capacity to replace external supply through the provision of food processing machinery (e.g. cassava mills, rice hullers, oil processing machinery) and technical training; and

³ Priority will be given to vegetable varieties rich in iron, vitamin A, vitamin C, protein and other nutrients and minerals.

- strengthen the availability of agricultural products in the market by providing transport vouchers, facilitation of commercial relationships inside the different value chains (e.g. joint FAO/WFP Purchase from Africa to Africa approach) and organization of agricultural products fairs in zones with poor food access.

2.2.C. Bush meat alternatives

Bush meat represents an important source of protein and income. However, hunting, handling, preparing and consuming bush meat may pose health risks, and some governments have imposed bush meat restrictions. Therefore, providing an alternative is crucial to maintain incomes, safeguard nutrition and reduce health risks.

FAO, as an immediate alternative, will provide:

- short-cycle livestock (e.g. village chickens, pigeons and small ruminants), veterinary products, and animal feed;
- fish processing materials and equipment available locally to increase fish production and their market availability; and
- training and support services in animal health care, livestock production, fishing and fish processing methods and small business management to ensure long-term sustainability.

2.2.D. Cash transfer, income generation and microfinance

The different measures taken to contain the EVD outbreak have had a direct impact on household purchasing power. Productive safety nets that combine cash transfer initiatives with the provision of productive assets represent the best way to ensure food access while protecting or restoring vulnerable household livelihoods. Special attention will be given to women's associations who have been particularly hit by the EVD outbreak.

FAO will support productive safety nets, including:

- unconditional cash transfers quantified to cover the survival deficit for households that have lost their workforce during the crisis;
- cash- or food-for-work activities to cover the survival deficit while helping protect productive assets (e.g. conservation farming, plantation clearing, field preparation); and
- additional cash transfer combined with agricultural/livestock input provision geared toward restoring livelihoods and assets lost during the crisis.

2.2.E. Nutritional education

Nutritional education will ensure that communities are informed of the necessity to adopt better food behaviours and care practices that prevent malnutrition. FAO will implement nutrition-sensitive activities in close collaboration with UNICEF and partners, emphasizing:

- the need for a balanced and diversified diet, particularly in affected areas and areas where bush meat and forest products are widely consumed; and
- food safety and hygiene, both in general and in the particular context of EVD.

3

BUILD RESILIENCE OF COMMUNITIES TO DISEASE THREATS



Funding needs: USD 4 million

FAO will assist affected countries and most at-risk countries in the region to build preparedness to disease threats. The scale of the current outbreak illustrates the practical difficulties in preventing and controlling human-to-human transmission once the virus has passed from wildlife to humans. Mitigating the risks of exposure at the interface between humans and wildlife, including bush meat harvesting, handling and processing practices, is an important step in preventing future outbreaks of EVD.

Four key facts raise two critical issues:

- Fact 1)** single or multiple human exposures to the virus from wildlife can lead to human-to-human transmission and a subsequent epidemic in human populations;
- Fact 2)** transmission may evolve rapidly before it is diagnosed in humans;
- Fact 3)** the reduction of the time between the initial human exposure, confirmation of infection and implementation of contingency plans is critical; and
- Fact 4)** human behaviours and attitudes may complicate the containment of outbreaks in human populations.

Issue 1) any unusual mortality in wildlife requires analysis; and

Issue 2) the risk of human exposure to the virus at the interface with wildlife must be reduced in areas where the virus is established.

Output 3.1: Measures implemented to reduce risks of exposure to EVD through contact with wildlife

FAO will:

- conduct sociological and anthropological studies related to risk factors;
- carry out risk assessments of virus spill over from wildlife/animals to humans; and
- formulate risk management options focusing on the interface between human, animals and ecosystems.

Output 3.2: Early warning systems developed to identify Ebola virus in wildlife and trigger response

FAO will help countries develop a coordinated, structured system of disease surveillance to better understand and manage risks at the human-animal-environment interface. In particular, FAO will:

- develop wildlife/animal surveillance systems;
- support directly the collection and analysis of epidemiological data; and
- train partners in the collection of wildlife epidemiological data using appropriate biosecurity measures.

Output 3.3: Vulnerabilities assessed for communities relying on bush meat

FAO will conduct:

- bush meat value chain analyses; and
- quantitative and qualitative analyses of bush meat as a source of protein for forestry and hunting communities, and bush meat as a source of income.

Output 3.4: Best practices in emergency response to EVD promoted

FAO will organize national and regional workshops to:

- capitalize on initiatives linked to restoring livelihoods and to reducing the risk of EVD exposure; and
- draw lessons, identify gaps and develop road maps for next steps.

4

STRENGTHEN COORDINATION FOR IMPROVED RESPONSE



Funding needs: USD 1.7 million

Output 4.1: Regional and national actions coordinated for effective, rapid response

FAO, WFP and other actors working in food security will ensure a timely and effective emergency response to the EVD outbreak through strengthened coordination at regional and country levels. This will: (i) enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian action, based on an ethical obligation and accountability to the populations affected by the outbreak; (ii) acknowledge diversity as an asset of the humanitarian community; (iii) recognize the interdependence among humanitarian organizations; and (iv) ensure commitment to building and nurturing effective partnerships.

FAO and partners have begun establishing a system to coordinate regional and national food security response. To ensure a holistic approach, FAO will contribute to the approaches of the Food Security Cluster, including:

- supporting the Regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG) in Dakar, Senegal to oversee regional coordination; and
- contributing to national food security and nutrition mechanisms in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, including support to clusters should new units be activated.

The response to the EVD outbreak is nationally led and owned. To support this country-led response, the regional FSNWG will be the platform whereupon food security needs are analysed and disseminated to all relevant stakeholders for appropriate response targeting. The FSNWG will work closely with the other clusters. The regional and national teams will participate in coordination and inter-cluster meetings and crosscutting issue-related meetings.

The FSNWG will ensure that all elements of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee project cycle are coordinated, including assessments, data analysis, response analysis, accountability to affected populations and monitoring and evaluation. Resilience-building activities will be promoted at the onset of operations, ensuring a smooth transition from emergency response to recovery.

Output 4.2: Technical and operational capacities reinforced

This complex event requires a multisector and regional approach to meet needs on the ground. To ensure this approach is mainstreamed throughout its activities, FAO is providing oversight and coherence through its:

- Subregional Resilience Hub for West Africa;
- Regional Office for Africa; and
- Emergency and Rehabilitation Division (with support of technical departments).

Due to its strategic geographic and socio-political location, the Resilience Hub for West Africa, based in Dakar, Senegal, is well positioned to ensure programme coordination and effectiveness by:

- actively participating in regional humanitarian fora and thematic working groups (which are concentrated in Dakar);
- maintaining a pool of experts on food security, disaster risk reduction, nutrition, animal health, epidemiology, anthropology, communication, operations and other profiles;
- deploying surge support in terms of experts and tools to address gaps where identified in affected and at-risk countries; and
- accessing information and developing in-depth analyses to inform policy- and decision-makers.

Located in Accra, the FAO Regional Office for Africa is well positioned to link the efforts of the Resilience Hub for West Africa to the overarching initiatives of the UN and international community through the UNMEER platform.

The FAO Emergency and Rehabilitation Division at headquarters supports countries and partners to prepare for and respond to threats to food security and agricultural livelihoods. With over 20 years of experience in assessing food insecurity and managing emergencies, the Emergency and Rehabilitation Division provides a crucial pool of expertise to respond to this outbreak.

Output 4.3: Critical information shared rapidly and communication ensured

Given the complexity of the EVD outbreak, it is crucial that information is shared optimally within and outside of the agency and with the relevant partners in a timely manner.

FAO will:

- collect, collate and disseminate information on socio-economic and nutrition impacts;
- distribute strategy documents to FAO partners in Dakar and at regional and global levels;
- share food security updates and briefing notes with donors, partners and the general public;
- ensure visibility of FAO country and regional actions through videos, photos and other media; and
- handle press relations with regional and international media to highlight critical issues.

PROGRAMME BUDGET

The total budget required to implement the FAO Regional Response Programme (October 2014 – September 2015) is USD 30 million.

Summary budget by output and country in USD October 2014 – September 2015		Guinea	Liberia	Sierra Leone	Low-transmission, at-risk countries	TOTAL
1	SAVE LIVES BY STOPPING THE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE	500 000	1 095 000	320 000	630 000	2 545 000
Output 1.1	Disease is controlled in affected countries, spread is stopped in at-risk countries	400 000	876 000	250 000	450 000	1 976 000
Output 1.2	Improve preparedness and response capacities at national and regional level	100 000	219 000	70 000	180 000	569 000
2	BOOST INCOMES AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION	5 139 867	4 258 455	12 034 001	600 000	22 032 323
Output 2.1	Carry out comprehensive impact assessments	100 000		300 000	50 000	450 000
Output 2.2	Implement immediate integrated interventions to ensure/ restore food and nutrition security	5 039 867	4 258 455	11 734 001	550 000	21 582 323
3	BUILD RESILIENCE OF COMMUNITIES TO DISEASE THREATS	1 000 000	1 000 000	1 000 000	1 000 000	4 000 000
Output 3.1	Measures to reduce the risk of exposure to EVD from wildlife are identified and implemented	550 000	550 000	550 000	550 000	2 200 000
Output 3.2	An early warning system for timely identification of Ebola virus in wildlife is developed	300 000	300 000	300 000	300 000	1 200 000
Output 3.3	Food security and livelihood vulnerability of rural forestry and hunting communities is assessed	100 000	100 000	100 000	100 000	400 000
Output 3.4	Promote best practices on emergency response to EVD	50 000	50 000	50 000	50 000	200 000
4	STRENGTHEN COORDINATION TO IMPROVE RESPONSE	195 000	195 000	195 000	1 115 000	1 700 000
Output 4.1	Regional and national actions coordinated	195 000	195 000	195 000	195 000	780 000
Output 4.2	Technical and operational capacities reinforced				800 000	800 000
Output 4.3	Critical information shared rapidly and communication ensured				120 000	120 000
TOTAL		6 834 867	6 548 455	13 549 001	3 345 000	30 277 323

EBOLA

VIRUS DISEASE OUTBREAK

FAO REGIONAL RESPONSE PROGRAMME | WEST AFRICA

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