



FAO REGIONAL RESPONSE PROGRAMME WEST AFRICA

SUMMARY

OCTOBER 2014 – SEPTEMBER 2015

EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE OUTBREAK



The outbreak of Ebola virus disease, first reported in March 2014, has severely affected Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, resulting in tragic loss of life and adversely impacting agriculture and food security. On 18 September 2014, the United Nations (UN) Security Council adopted Resolution 2177 (2014) urging immediate action to curb the spread of the disease.

The outbreak is unprecedented in scale and geographical scope. Control measures and other restrictions have curtailed the movement of goods and services, including food items. This has resulted in panic buying, food shortages and rising food prices. Labour shortages are threatening the impending harvest, as well as food and cash crop production in affected areas.

The food security and nutrition of countless people is at risk. A multisectoral approach is required to contain the outbreak and stabilize affected areas while preventing a long-term food security crisis. FAO, through its Regional Response Programme, is working with countries to respond to Ebola, to protect lives and livelihoods and to safeguard food security and nutrition.

STRATEGY

FAO's strategy is to provide immediate support to affected and at-risk countries, complemented by medium- to longer-term assistance. FAO's approach focuses on supporting humanitarian response, protecting food security and improving the overall resilience of vulnerable and fragile populations in a region that is particularly vulnerable to crises and shocks.

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

"The gravity and scale of the situation now require a level of international action unprecedented for an emergency" – Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General

FUNDING

USD 30 million required
to meet critical needs

BENEFICIARIES

90 000 households
affected or at-risk

TIMING

Oct 2014 – Sep 2015
for urgent and lasting impact

PROGRAMME COMPONENTS

1 SAVE LIVES BY STOPPING THE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE

Social mobilization and risk communication: Through farmers' groups, Community Listener's Clubs, animal health workers, forestry networks and local leaders, FAO will help mobilize communities to stop transmission in affected countries and prevent spread across borders.

Preparedness and emergency response capacities: Under a One Health approach, FAO will strengthen national and regional capacities, particularly in disease response and contingency planning.

2 BOOST INCOMES AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION TO SAFEGUARD LIVELIHOODS

Impact assessments: Understanding needs is critical in designing support. FAO will work with partners to assess the impacts of Ebola on agriculture, food security, nutrition and livelihoods.

Emergency crop production and harvesting: FAO will provide essential packages of agriculture inputs and support to kick-start sustainable production for the most affected farming communities.

Post-harvest activities and marketing solutions: FAO will supplement transport, storage and processing capacities to avoid harvest losses. Reviving trade, FAO will facilitate commercial relationships and build linkages between producers, sellers and markets.

Bush meat alternatives: FAO will provide short-cycle livestock (e.g. poultry, small ruminants), fishing and aquaculture materials and training to enable alternative sources of protein and livelihoods.

Income generation and productive safety nets: FAO will design innovative cash transfer, microfinance and savings and loan tools as emergency stopgaps for low-income households. As the backbone of local economies and the most affected group, women's associations will play a key role in restoring financial capacities.

Nutritional education: Nutritional education provided in collaboration with partners will help prevent malnutrition, while hygiene and food safety training will reduce health risks.

3 BUILD RESILIENCE OF COMMUNITIES TO DISEASE THREATS

Reducing risk of Ebola spillover from wildlife: Virologists, wildlife experts and socio-anthropologists will assess risks along the human-animals-ecosystem interface and develop risk management options for affected and at-risk populations.

Early warning systems to identify Ebola virus and trigger rapid response: FAO will support wildlife/animal surveillance systems, epidemiological data collection and training to link disease detection to public health interventions.

Vulnerability of communities relying on bush meat: FAO will build understanding on bush meat as a source of protein and income for rural communities, and analyse the links between bush meat production systems, markets and consumers.

Promotion of best practices: Through a participatory approach, FAO will gather together national and regional stakeholders to draw lessons and promote improved practices for long-term resilience.

4 STRENGTHEN COORDINATION FOR IMPROVED RESPONSE

Ensuring effective response to Ebola requires regional coordination. FAO and partners will meet country needs across West Africa by reinforcing:

- Regional and national coordination mechanisms (Food Security and Nutrition Clusters and Working Groups)
- Regional surge response mechanisms and resources
- Critical information sharing, communication and advocacy

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