



# RECOVERING FROM THE EBOLA CRISIS

## A SUMMARY REPORT

SUBMITTED BY UNITED NATIONS, THE WORLD BANK, EUROPEAN UNION AND AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK  
AS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE FORMULATION OF NATIONAL EBOLA RECOVERY STRATEGIES  
IN GUINEA, LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE



This report is a contribution to ongoing efforts by the Governments of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to design their national Ebola virus disease recovery strategies. It has been prepared by a joint team of experts led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and comprising UN agencies and the World Bank, European Union and African Development Bank, in consultation with the African Union, Economic Community of West African States and Mano River Union. In addition to studying existing assessments of the impact of the Ebola crisis, the team visited the three countries from 12 to 16 January 2015 to consult with governments and development partners. This summary report is based on a full report as well as three detailed reports submitted to each of the three governments as contributions to their national recovery planning processes. It reflects the views of the technical teams involved.



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## ACRONYMS

CBO	Community-based organization
EVD	Ebola virus disease
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EPI	Expanded Programme on Immunizations
FGM	Female genital mutilation
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
ICT	Information and communication technology
IPC	Infection prevention control
MRU	Mano River Union
MSMEs	Micro, small and medium enterprises
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PHC	Primary Health Care
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises
UNMEER	United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization



### A 'mysterious' disease began silently spreading in a small

village in Guinea on 26 December 2013 but was not identified as Ebola until 21 March 2014. The outbreak of Ebola virus disease (EVD) in parts of West Africa is now the largest, longest, most severe and most complex in the nearly four-decade history of this disease. As of mid-February 2015, there have been almost 23,000 reported, confirmed, probable and suspected cases of EVD in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, according to the World Health Organization, with almost 9,000 reported deaths and with outcomes for many cases largely unknown.<sup>1</sup> The socio-economic impact of the EVD outbreak is substantial. National economies have become isolated with stalemates in key sectors. Many people have lost employment, and agricultural fields have been abandoned in the most-affected rural areas. Livelihoods of households and communities have deteriorated. The education of an estimated 5 million children and youth has been set back as schools did not re-open at the start of the new school year in September 2014. The outbreak has strained the finances of governments. Additional expenditure to contain the EVD crisis amidst drastic shortfalls in domestic revenue has increased national deficits.

In response to a call by the United Nations Secretary-General and the Governments of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, an international team conducted an Ebola Recovery Assessment. The multi-partner mission was carried out in January 2015 by the United Nations, European Union, World Bank and African Development Bank, in consultation with a range of partners including the Mano River Union, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and African Union. The aim was to contribute towards laying the foundation for short-, medium- and long-term recovery while the

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, Ebola Situation Report, 18 February 2015.

medical emergency response continues to tackle the epidemic. Discussions during the mission focused on five interrelated questions:

- What pre-Ebola structural conditions and practices facilitated the rapid spread of the EVD?
- What has been the direct impact of the EVD epidemic on structures and systems?
- What are the critical recovery priorities for the short term (12 months) and for the medium-to-long term (3 to 5 years)?
- What are existing Ebola-related capacities and resources on which recovery should be based?
- What immediate and medium-term risks could undermine recovery efforts and outcomes if no mitigating measures are put in place?

Four thematic working groups were established for the assessment to ensure full coverage of Ebola-related issues i) health, nutrition, and WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene); ii) governance, peacebuilding and social cohesion; iii) infrastructure and basic services; and iv) socio-economic revitalization. In addition to thematic area analysis, country reports provide additional information on the three Ebola-affected countries.

This summary report is based on a full report as well as three detailed reports submitted to each of the three governments as contributions to their national recovery planning processes. The full report of the Ebola Recovery Assessment reflects views expressed by partners met during the mission, including government officials from a range of ministries, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), development partners, development banks and civil society. That report provides an assessment of the considerable progress made by the Ebola-affected countries towards containing the epidemic in the year since the outbreak. It describes where the countries are in their stabilization and recovery planning efforts, and explores the drivers of the vulnerability that enabled a local epidemic to escalate into a regional humanitarian, social, economic and security crisis with considerable international ramifications. It identifies additional requirements for the countries to ‘get to zero’ Ebola cases and establish conditions to minimize the risk of its resurgence. It also considers the gaps and challenges of rebuilding the foundations for national development, taking into account the imperatives for ‘building back better’ and enabling resilient institutions and decentralized services. This entails consideration of the broader risk landscape, including health, governance and conflict risks within the three countries, the Mano River sub-region and the West Africa region as a whole.

The full report will be made available separately. It will serve as a basis for increased advocacy for support to Ebola-related recovery by the UN Secretary-General, Peacebuilding Commission, World Bank, European Union, African Development Bank and other development actors.

The analyses, policy recommendations and suggested actions that emerged from the mission and additional consultations with stakeholders are summarized here.

The first section provides context for the challenges of post-Ebola recovery. The second section examines the scope of the recovery process, including stopping the epidemic, risk management, restoring and strengthening capacity, restoring livelihoods and building community resilience and addressing structural factors. Section three is a summary of findings from the Ebola Recovery Assessment, followed by section four on the key messages from consultations undertaken during the assessment. Section five focuses on the country-specific findings, including key findings, key recommendations and crosscutting issues for Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The final section on outlook and next steps proposes ways in which the assessment team could offer support to the Ebola-affected countries as they halt the present EVD outbreak and plan for recovery.



The Ebola outbreak in parts of West Africa is the most severe in the history of the disease. The epidemics' unprecedented escalation is linked to the region's lack of experience with the virus, combined with a host of factors including culture, history, geography, weak health systems, over-centralized governance with inadequate accountability systems, fear, mistrust of state institutions, poor infrastructure, and a much-delayed international response. The impact in terms of loss of human life and suffering is severe, as is the socio-economic impact.

The purpose of the multi-partner mission was to assess the impact of the EVD crisis on the three most-affected countries, and to recommend ways in which post-Ebola support recovery programmes can also promote resilience in the development of the countries and the sub-region by addressing the underlying systemic issues and shortcomings that would deepen fragility if left unattended. The mission was concerned not only with ending the present EVD crisis but also with the requirements for handling disasters of similar magnitude that may emerge in the future.

The immediate priority is to end the epidemic. It is also critical to address the adverse conditions that enabled a localized epidemic to escalate into national crises with serious regional and global ramifications and to minimize the risk of its resurgence. Strong and effective health systems in the affected countries, supported by regional and global disease surveillance networks, are central to this endeavour. Experience from elsewhere suggests that even after these countries stop the epidemic, the virus may remain latent in the region. As such, post-disaster recovery programmes must integrate systems and processes to ensure that disease surveillance is improved, health systems are built back better and in a conflict-sensitive manner, and that other relevant capacities are in place with appropriate levels of funding to sustain them over the medium and long term in order to minimize the risk of relapse into crisis.

*The ultimate goal of a post-Ebola recovery strategy is to re-establish the conditions for a quick return to a path of economic growth, improved state-society relations, and overall human development that can foster more inclusive societies in the future. To achieve this goal, the countries must go beyond correcting the proximate conditions that enabled the crisis to worsen.*

For this to happen, effective communication and information management, and decentralized health delivery systems will be critical. Related to this are effective incentives and payment systems for health workers, environmentally sound health care waste management, institutionalization of health monitoring and effective and targeted social protection, among other measures.

The ultimate goal of a post-Ebola recovery strategy is to re-establish the conditions for a quick return to a path of economic growth, improved state-society relations, and overall human development that can foster more inclusive societies in the future. To achieve this goal, the countries must go beyond correcting the proximate conditions that enabled the crisis to worsen. The survivors and others directly affected by the disease must be assisted to regain their lives and the affected communities supported to recover their livelihoods.

This report identifies the additional requirements for the countries to get to zero Ebola cases, and re-establish conditions for the resumption of healthy growth and development, taking into full account the broader risk landscape, including health, governance and conflict risks within the countries and the Mano River sub-region.

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