



**United Nations Emergency Ebola Response (UNEERO) Head of Office:**  
**« We have beaten Ebola in Eastern DRC but the struggle isn't over yet»**

Goma, June 25, 2020 - It has taken almost two years of struggle to bring to an end the 10th epidemic of Ebola virus disease in the east of DRC. Today, as the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo officially announces the end of the epidemic, Mr. Abdou Dieng, head of UNEERO, congratulates the authorities, partners, health workers and communities that have been at the forefront of the multi-faceted and complex struggle.

"We are in the country in which the Ebola virus first came to life but through working successfully to defeat ten epidemics, the authorities have gained a considerable bank of knowledge about the virus. Before we even ended the 10th epidemic, an 11th epidemic was started in Mbandaka. Despite this, communities across DRC need to know now and in the future that they can recover from the disease," said Dieng.

The 10th epidemic marks a turning point in the fight against Ebola and symbolizes new hope in a country where EVD would appear to be endemic. With the advanced use of vaccines and treatments in the tenth epidemic and a greater understanding of how the disease can be managed at the community level, the lives of more than 1,000 people have been saved. We can build on this knowledge to save thousands more lives in the future.

"Thanks to investments made during the tenth epidemic, we are fortunate to now have the necessary treatments, competent local teams, trained and ready to intervene. There are lessons to be learnt from the tenth epidemic and the authorities must do so and apply them," said Mr. Dieng.

Despite medical advances, this epidemic has been the deadliest in the history of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with more than 2,200 deaths. One of the main obstacles during the Ebola response has been insecurity with more than 300 attacks on health facilities and 11 deaths among medical staff and patients. The east of the country hit by the epidemic is known for its instability with 125 armed groups operating in the area. Beyond armed violence, there has been a widespread mistrust amongst communities affected by the disease that the Ebola response has had to face and adapt to.

"One of the greatest lessons learned is to listen to communities through dialogue, working with them to apply what we hear to planning the response. It is essential to give people the opportunity to take ownership of the response, without which, we risk losing their confidence and support," assures Mr. Dieng, who underlines the efforts made to transfer capacity to local teams.

Even before the end of the 10th Ebola epidemic a new Ebola epidemic was identified in Mbandaka, Ecuador, more than 1,000 kilometers from eastern Congo. The experiences and lessons of the 10th



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Ebola epidemic must be taken into account as soon as possible in the design and implementation of the response to the 11th epidemic.

"Ebola is endemic in the country and the Congolese people and authorities must be able to recognize and respond to the disease quickly building on lessons learnt during the tenth epidemic in particular," added Mr. Dieng.

The establishment of the 90-day surveillance period as well as continuous and regular monitoring of Ebola survivors are essential to detect cases and contain them quickly. The DRC is in the grip of two simultaneous epidemics, the EVD which strikes Mbandaka today in Equateur and the pandemic of COVID-19, not to mention other diseases like measles or malaria which continue to claim victims in the country.

"The tenth Ebola epidemic has had a massive impact on the local health system in eastern DRC and on the wellbeing and standing of local communities," said Dieng. "These communities and all those who survived the disease will require continued support," said Abdou Dieng, head of UNEERO.

If eastern Congo can today celebrate the end of the 10th Ebola epidemic, a myriad of challenges persist in the region: volatile security situation, food insecurity, poverty and many other scourges that people face.

"We have been able to end this Ebola epidemic but the needs of communities remain immeasurable and the Congolese authorities and the international community must commit to continue supporting these communities now and in the future," said Dieng.

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**Abdou Dieng (Senegal)**  
**United Nations Emergency Ebola Response Head of Office**

Following the Secretary-General's announcement to strengthen the coordination and support mechanism in the epicentre of the Ebola outbreak in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo Abdou Dieng was appointed Deputy Special Coordinator of the United Nations Emergency Ebola Response, based in Goma, DRC in mid- October 2019, and Head of Office on March 1st, 2020 subsequently with, among others, the specific responsibility to reach zero cases.

Mr. Dieng started his humanitarian career with the World Food Programme (WFP) in 1994 as senior logistics coordinator until 2003, responsible for the entire spectrum of logistics activities in Central Africa based in Yaoundé, Cameroun; Central and Latin America based in Nicaragua covering: Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela; and in Italy in charge of the overall supervision of WFP logistics transport activities in the southern Africa and Great Lakes regions, including Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, Lesotho, Swaziland, Madagascar, and Namibia.

Mr. Dieng has also served as WFP Country Representative in Guinea Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ethiopia and appointed Senior Humanitarian Coordinator in the Central Africa Republic with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs from December 2013 to April 2014. In November 2014, the Secretary-General appointed Mr. Dieng as the Ebola Crisis Manager for Guinea, as part of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER).

In this capacity, Mr. Dieng continued the Mission's work with the Guinea's government and key stakeholders under the World Health Organization (WHO) to ensure a rapid and effective international response to the crisis until zero cases were reached in December 2015. The country was declared Ebola-free in June 2016. More recently, in June 2019, as World Food Programme's Head of Mission in Venezuela, Mr. Dieng was responsible to liaise with national authorities to facilitate WFP's first Food Security Assessment in the country at the aftermath of the crisis.



Prior to this assignment Mr. Dieng was appointed Special Advisor to the United Nations Secretary General for the Sahel on 12 February 2019. A position to which Mr. Dieng brought significant international and regional experiences and expertise as well as political analysis stemming from his United Nations previous responsibilities.

Mr. Dieng was appointed the World Food Programme (WFP) Regional Director for West and Central Africa between 2016 and 2019, overseeing 19 countries, over 2,200 staff members for an approx. 1.3 billion US\$ 2017 yearly budget.

Born in 1955, Mr. Dieng graduated from the University of Dakar in 1983 with a bachelor's degree in business law. He also holds a master's degree in transport economy from the Ecole supérieure des transports internationaux in Marseilles, France, earned in 1984.

**Key facts and figures:**

- The 10th Ebola outbreak in the DRC was declared on August 1st, 2018
- WHO declared it a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on July 17, 2019
- The outbreak affected 29 health zones (211 health areas out of 471) across 3 provinces
- 2,287 people have died and 1,171 people have recovered from the virus. In total, 3,470 people were affected, including 3,317 confirmed and 153 probable cases).
- 303,409 people vaccinated with rVSV-ZEBOV vaccine during this outbreak
- 20,339 people vaccinated with the second vaccine, J&J, until February 29, 2020
- 181 million have been controlled at points of entry and control
- 216,914 people have been tested for Ebola in this outbreak
- Over 250,000 contacts have been traced during this outbreak