

Joint Co-Chairs' Summary

Ministerial Virtual Roundtable on the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda

Co-chaired by European Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management Hadja Lahbib, WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, and Africa CDC Director-General Dr Jean Kaseya

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Today, we convened ministers and representatives of affected and at-risk African countries, international organisations, humanitarian partners and donors to address the Ebola outbreak with its epicentre in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and its spillover to Uganda and its wider regional implications.

We expressed our solidarity with the people and governments of the affected countries, and paid tribute to the courage and commitment of frontline health workers, humanitarian responders and local communities working under extremely difficult conditions.

We underlined that this outbreak in the DRC is unfolding in a highly complex environment marked by conflict, insecurity, displacement and restricted access. This is not only a health emergency; it is also a humanitarian and regional security challenge. The risk of further spread remains real, and urgent, coordinated action is required to contain the outbreak and protect vulnerable populations.

Participants stressed that the response must be guided by a common set of priorities: rapidly scaling up surveillance, deployment of diagnostics, clinical care, infection prevention and control, risk communication and community engagement; safeguarding continuity of essential health services; and strengthening preparedness in neighbouring countries through a coherent national and regional approach.

Participants also noted that implementing blanket travel restrictions or bans in response to the current Bundibugyo Ebola virus disease outbreak is not supported by public health evidence and could undermine both national and global health security goals. Countries are advised to adopt evidence-based, risk-based measures that help control the outbreak while allowing essential travel, trade, and humanitarian activities to continue.

We cannot allow the response to take away resources and efforts for essential health services and the humanitarian context in the DRC.

We commend the international assistance coming from many regional and national partners notably the European Union and its Member States, the United Kingdom, the United States, Norway and Canada while noting with grave concern that the response remains significantly underfunded. Participants called for the rapid mobilisation of additional resources to support national authorities, WHO, Africa CDC, the Red Cross Movement, UN agencies and humanitarian partners in implementing the response at scale.

We reaffirmed the central importance of WHO's and African CDC leadership in health emergency coordination and technical guidance, working in close partnership with, national authorities and all operational partners, under a "One Response – One Plan – One Budget – One

Team” approach. Participants stressed the need for a clear, and transparent follow-up mechanism to monitor commitments and gaps to the response to establish accountability.

Participants emphasised that humanitarian and health access is indispensable for an effective response. We called on all relevant actors to facilitate safe, sustained and unimpeded access for health and humanitarian personnel, supplies and laboratory samples, including across borders and conflict lines, and to ensure predictable humanitarian and medical corridors. Respect for international humanitarian law, the protection of civilians, and the civilian character of the response are essential.

We further stressed the urgent need for practical, coordinated solutions to operational bottlenecks, including transport and logistics, medical evacuations, staff movements, laboratory capacity, and access to medical countermeasures. We welcomed ongoing efforts to accelerate work on developing and validating diagnostics, vaccines and therapeutics specifically for the Bundibugyo Ebola strain, and underscored the importance of enabling robust clinical research and equitable access arrangements as rapidly as possible.

Participants also highlighted that community trust and local ownership are decisive to containing this Ebola outbreak. Local actors, community leaders and existing community-based structures must be fully engaged in all pillars of the response, including surveillance, risk communication, safe and dignified burials, and care delivery.

As Co-Chairs, we call for intensified international support, renewed multilateral engagement, stronger regional coordination under African Union leadership, and immediate follow-up on the operational priorities identified today. We also reiterate the urgent need for a cessation of hostilities in affected areas to enable life-saving action.

We remain fully committed to working together with all partners to support the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighbouring countries in bringing this outbreak under control swiftly and effectively.