



ORAL REPORT

COUNCIL — 203RD SESSION

Subject No. 14.3.7: Aviation medicine

UPDATE ON THE EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE OUTBREAK

(Presented by the Secretary General)

1. The first cases of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) occurred in Guinea during December 2013 and by May 2014 cases were also being reported in Liberia and Sierra Leone. In July, a symptomatic case travelled by air to Nigeria and in August an individual developed EVD symptoms after arriving in Senegal by road. In October, a traveller from Liberia developed EVD after arriving in the United States and two health care workers attending the patient in the United States were subsequently diagnosed with EVD. A health care worker in Spain was diagnosed with EVD after attending a patient evacuated from Sierra Leone.

2. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared a “Public Health Emergency of International Concern” on 8 August 2014 under the International Health Regulations, and reconfirmed this decision on 22 September. On 18 September 2014, the United Nations Security Council debated the Ebola outbreak, describing it as a “threat to international peace and security”. It adopted Resolution 2177 (2014) to establish a UN-wide initiative to focus efforts of all relevant UN agencies to confront the crisis. On 8 October, WHO reported “there is no evidence that the EVD epidemic in West Africa is being brought under control”.

3. Since the beginning of August 2014, ICAO has been involved in a number of EVD-related initiatives:

- a) C/MED is an advisor to the World Health Organization (WHO) Ebola Emergency Committee (the outcome of the third meeting on 22 October is summarized in sub-paragraph m));
- b) ICAO chairs and coordinates the Joint Ebola Travel and Transport Task Force with membership from: WHO, International Maritime Organization; United Nations World Tourism Organization; International Air Transport Association (IATA), Airports Council International (ACI), Cruise Lines International Association; International Chamber of Shipping. It holds regular telephone conferences and provides coordinated public statements on the Ebola situation as it affects the transport sector and reviews transport-related public health documents;
- c) ICAO, with IATA and ACI, works with the WHO and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to assist with development of various aviation-related procedures and guidance on management of EVD in the aviation sector;
- d) ICAO has signed a MOU with the United Nations Development Programme on “Operational Aspects of Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund”;

- e) joint WHO/ICAO State letter (2014/67) addressed to Ministers of Health and Ministers Responsible for Civil Aviation urging States to ensure that any measures imposing restrictions on travel or trade are commensurate with and restricted to reducing the public health risk;
- f) an iSTARS/SPACE application for tracking Ebola-related NOTAMs has been developed;
- g) an Action Plan for States and International Organizations has been developed by ICAO to facilitate harmonized implementation of WHO recommendations relevant to the aviation sector;
- h) joint ICAO/WHO assistance visits to States and international airports have been requested by States under the Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation (CAPSCA); these are under consideration and subject to availability of funding;
- i) ICAO has facilitated the lifting of restrictions on flights by some States;
- j) ICAO attended the East African Community Ministerial Meeting on Ebola, 16 to 17 September 2014, which resulted in a communiqué calling for States to avoid imposing restrictions on flights;
- k) Switzerland and Thailand have contributed voluntary funds to CAPSCA under the SAFE Fund, and other States are being encouraged to do the same;
- l) The next annual CAPSCA Global Coordination Meeting will be held in Cairo from 17 to 20 November; and
- m) The main points of the third WHO Ebola Emergency Committee Meeting on 22 October 2014 are:
 - i) The event remains a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.
 - ii) Outbreaks in Senegal and Nigeria were declared over as of 17 and 20 October.
 - iii) The main emphasis is to stop the transmission of Ebola within the three primarily affected States. This is the essential step for preventing international spread.
 - iv) In order to increase public confidence in the effectiveness of exit (departure) screening, States should collect data from the process and share it with WHO.
 - v) Entry (arrival) screening may have a limited effect in reducing international spread and the required resources are significant.
 - vi) The Committee reiterated its previous recommendation that there should be no general ban on international travel or trade because: (a) it would cause economic hardship; and (b) this may consequently increase the uncontrolled migration of people from affected countries, thereby raising the risk of international spread.
 - vii) The cancellation of mass gatherings by States without Ebola transmission is not recommended. A risk-based approach is encouraged on a case-by-case basis.

- viii) All States should strengthen education and communication efforts to combat stigma, disproportionate fear and inappropriate measures. Such efforts may also encourage self-reporting and early diagnosis and care.

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