

13 November 2014

**Remarks of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,  
President of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at a Briefing on Ebola**

**Excellencies,**

**Ms. Susana Malcorra, Secretary-General's Chef de Cabinet,**

**Mr. Anthony Banbury, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UN Mission for Emergency Ebola Response (UNMEER),**

**Dr. David Nabarro, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Ebola,**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Since our last briefing on this matter, slightly over a month ago, we have seen some important progress made against the unprecedented outbreak of Ebola.

We extend our solidarity to the governments and people in the affected countries and commend them for their gallant efforts and measures taken towards combating the disease.

Our deep appreciation also goes out to the African Union and the international community, which have risen to the occasion by pledging critical resources to support the Ebola response.

We also commend the heroic efforts of non-governmental organizations, medical and healthcare staff; many of whom have been on the front lines since day one.

I am pleased to note that due to these collective efforts, there have been important improvements on the ground.

The United Nations' first emergency health mission, UNMEER, has deployed crucial resources, supplies, and people to the most affected areas in West Africa.

The presence of foreign health workers and the establishment of UNMEER have made a difference, while additional treatment facilities have been set-up and staffed.

Targeted outreach campaigns are reaching more communities, including those in remote areas.

It is now essential to scale up these critical steps toward stemming the outbreak through a systematic, coordinated and sustained approach.

**Excellencies,**

The current trends regarding the spread of Ebola remain complex and the overall picture is still troubling. In some areas, the number of new cases is slowing down; yet, the total number of cases across the region remains high. A recent spike in new cases in some specific locations is of great concern.

The resounding message from those in the hardest hit areas is that while we are making encouraging progress in combatting Ebola, we have not yet won the war. We must do more to ensure that the momentum is sustained and that critical resources reach those in urgent need without delay.

More specialized health care workers are urgently needed on the ground to work side-by-side with national health care staff. There is urgent need for more Ebola treatment centres and units, reliable data, and greater coordination amongst all partners involved in the response.

Strong efforts must also be taken to avoid stigmatization. In this regard, it is essential to put into place proper screening procedures, rather than blanket measures such as travel bans and restrictions or quarantines based on fear or panic. Survivors and healthcare responders should be embraced.

Beyond the immediate challenges of the current crisis, there is also a need for greater focus on the recovery from this epidemic. Recovery efforts will certainly be long and arduous, as the outbreak has impacted all facets of everyday life in the affected countries.

Schools in many areas have been closed for nearly a year. Food production has sharply declined. The number of children orphaned by Ebola is staggering. The economic impact of the crisis is enormous.

The future of the healthcare systems in the affected countries is of particular concern. The epidemic has devastated weak healthcare systems. Increasingly, people are dying of illnesses such as malaria and tuberculosis, as scarce resources are diverted to the Ebola response.

A strong commitment will be needed from the international community to not only contain Ebola, but also to prevent other health emergencies. Strengthening the healthcare systems in the affected countries must be a top priority in the recovery efforts.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Despite the progress that has been made, now is not the time to become complacent. In this regard, I intend to convene regular briefings on this matter.

The international community must remain seized and continue to provide the much needed support for combatting this disease. Even as we sit here today, many people in the affected countries are losing the battle against Ebola.

This epidemic is far from contained. We must stay vigilant and committed to stopping this scourge. We cannot afford to take our eyes off this crisis and must remain focused until the job is done. Together, let us redouble efforts to bring this sad chapter in human history to a close.

I thank you for your attention.