

**Press Release N°333/2014****34 ASEOWA HEALTH PERSONNEL NOW AT WORK IN LIBERIA****Monrovia, Liberia 26 November 2104-**

The African Union's ASEOWA Head of Mission; Major General Dr. Julius Oketta, disclosed that the African Union Support to Ebola mission) has 34 personnel on ground and at work in Liberia, and the AU –ASEOWA medical team is handling the ETU at Ministry of Defense 1 (MOD1) while 6 medical doctors are also deployed to assist the Liberian health

sector in treating other non-Ebola diseases at the JFK national hospital.

Dr Oketta made the announced this on 26 November when he met with the Chinese government delegation, WHO and CDC to discuss collaboration efforts in fighting EVD in the epicenters of the EVD spread. Also present at the meeting was the special representative of the African Union to Liberia and Sierra Leone; Ambassador Toyin Solaja who welcomed the Chinese delegation and explained that AU-offices are normally present in post-conflict countries and as expected, the African Union Commission has sent forth a team of volunteer medical and non-medical personnel to the 3 majorly affected countries.

The Head of Mission for AU-ASEOWA, General Oketta also enumerated on the efforts of the African Union which is a body of the 54 member states of Africa, that has brought humanitarian and logistics support to the affected countries. The medical personnel include clinicians, epidemiologists, nurses and lab technicians while the non-medical personnel include logistics, psychosocial and communication teams.

According to the Head of Mission, the Nigerian government, as part of their efforts in supporting other affected countries, will be sending a team of volunteers to be deployed under the ASEOWA mission next week. He stated that the target number for Liberia deployment is 250 while for Sierra Leone is 160.

The WHO representative in Liberia also present at the meeting highlighted two major priorities which are hospital treatment and community outreach and also stated that the Liberian situation cannot be assessed in isolation without considering Sierra Leone, Guinea and now Mali which is developing cases. According to the WHO representative, Ebola has seriously affected the national health system in Liberia, and the request was

made that the Chinese government should assist by supporting the restoration of the health system.

In response, the Chinese delegation expressed gratitude to the partners for their efforts and stated that the Chinese government has so far provided 750 million Yen worth of support to countries affected by Ebola. They also mentioned that their agenda is to deploy up to 100 medical staff to Liberia and also to train local medical staff as part of their exit strategy for the post-Ebola phase.

The Chinese government already has an Ebola testing laboratory in Sierra Leone and will be constructing another in Liberia. This gesture was applauded by the ASEOWA head of mission as this would mean a faster turn over time for blood tests to determine the status of suspected and probable cases. The Chinese delegation also mentioned that they are willing and ready to participate in African Union's efforts in building a regional center for disease control (CDC) in Africa. They also indicated that the Chinese funded ETU being built will soon be opened to start admitting and treating patients and the medical evacuation plan also extends to other partners as well.

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