



African Union

Support to EBOLA outbreak in West Africa

ASEOWA

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ASEOWA- 81 Heroes from DRC Join Fight Against Ebola in Guinea

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The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has sent eighty-one (81) health workers to Guinea to fight against the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). The team comprises medical doctors, nurses, laboratory technicians, epidemiologists, humanitarian, psycho-social and communication professionals who will work directly in the Ebola Treatment Units (ETUs) and in the communities across Guinea to support efforts already underway to stop the epidemic. They will also train local health workers on how to prevent and contain the Ebola virus.

Their arrival on Friday 26th December, 2014, coincided with an official visit by the ASEOWA Head of Mission, Major General Dr. Julius Oketta, to Guinea. Speaking at the welcoming ceremony on Saturday 27th, December, 2014, Dr Oketta commended the volunteers for their show of African solidarity. He said, "The word that best qualifies you is heroes. Ebola is an African problem that has an African solution". He emphasised on the importance of discipline in the mission and stressed that, "To defeat Ebola, we must make the people know that Ebola starts with the people and ends with the people. It is a battle of hearts and minds and we must win the hearts and minds of the people". He added, "I am proud to tell you that for the past three months, no African (ASEOWA) volunteer has been infected". On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr. Oketta also thanked the DRC government. He later visited the DRC Chancellery and also met with government officials in Guinea.

Eleven (11) clinicians and laboratory technicians, who recently went through an intensive one month training on Ebola case management and prevention, and infection control procedures within an ETU setting in Monrovia, prior to their deployment in Guinea, were also awarded their certificates during the introductory function. Also a group of twelve (12) epidemiologists and public health officers were briefed by WHO and CDC staff on Ebola surveillance systems in Guinea and how contact tracing activities are being conducted. A series of trainings are also organized onsite for ASEOWA volunteers from DRC before they start working during the first week of January 2015.

The workforce from DRC has added to a contingent of experts, all serving under the framework of the African Union Support to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA) - a continental response to end the EVD epidemic in Africa.

The ASEOWA mission in Guinea which now counts almost one hundred and fifty (150) professionals took effect in early November 2014. It must be noted that since the occurrence of the EVD outbreak, a total of two thousand seven hundred and forty-three (2,743) cases have been registered in Guinea, with one thousand seven hundred and fifty (1,750) deaths as at 1st January 2015. Five ETUs, four laboratories and two transit centres are functional as of this date.



ASEOWA Head of Mission, Major General Dr. Julius Oketta welcomes DRC volunteers to Guinea



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