

Directorate of Information and Communication

Press Release

**Sierra Leone President Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma Welcomes African Union
Deployment of Health Experts in the Fight Against Ebola**

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia–13 October 2014: In continuation of his visit to the Ebola affected countries, the African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs H. E. Dr. Mustapha Sidiki Kaloko has informed the President of Sierra Leone, Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma about the African Union's response to the Ebola crises.

The AU Commissioner informed President Koroma on the formation of the African Union Support to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA) as part of the implementation of the decisions of the AU Peace and Security Council meeting held in Addis Ababa on 18 August 2014. He pointed out that the AU has already commenced the deployment of health teams made of doctors, nurses, epidemiologists and lab technicians to boost the human resources in treatment centres.

Commissioner Kaloko further explained steps the African Union has taken to engage Member States on the urgent need to rescind actions that led to border closures, flight cancellations and the stigmatisation of the affected countries. The Commissioner stressed the need for coordination and the mobilization human and other resources in the fight against the Ebola Virus Disease in the subregion.

President Koroma expressed appreciation for the AU intervention and deployment. He welcomed AU efforts towards normalizing air traffic as well as the AU visit, which he hoped would change the negative narrative that is preventing people from coming to states affected by Ebola. President Koroma urged the African Union under the leadership the Chairperson, HE Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma to intensify the advocacy campaign and the mobilization of support for the affected countries. He also expressed his wish for quicker involvement of the AU.

The AU visit to Sierra Leone marks the end of a two week tour which saw the Commissioner and his team travel to Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and Guinea. The visit was aimed at demonstrating African Union's solidarity with the affected countries and explaining the AU interventions in the fight against Ebola. In Nigeria and Ghana, the AU delegation held high level discussions with the respective Governments and also with ECOWAS with a view of coordinating regional efforts in the fight against Ebola.

Meanwhile, a team of 21 health and other experts arrived in Freetown on 13 October as part of the African Union Support to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa. Another team will be deployed to Guinea in a fortnight to complete the first phase of the AU deployment of experts to the affected subregion. The AU team is expected to complement ongoing efforts to tackle the Ebola Virus Disease.

For more information, visit <http://www.africa-union.org>

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