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PRESS STATEMENT ON THE UPDATE OF EBOLA AND CHOLERA

For Immediate Release

The Ebola outbreak in the five West African countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Senegal continues to spread and by September 6th, 2014, the cumulative number of cases stood at **4,269** with cumulative deaths standing at **2,288**.

In the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ebola has so far claimed **13** lives and **80** have been quarantined. Although there have been no cases of Ebola and there is no immediate threat of spread to Zambia of Ebola, considering the extent of the outbreak and recognizing the ease with which people travel between countries, the Ministries of Health and Community Development, Mother and Child Health continue to be alert and have heightened their surveillance.

Surveillance

- Screening of travelers to identify those at risk of Ebola is being conducted at points of Entry into Zambia.
- A second fixed Infra-Red fever Scanner has been installed at the Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe International Airport in Ndola. The first one was installed at Kenneth Kaunda International Airport in Lusaka. These machines assist in detecting raised body temperature of travelers which is one of the symptoms of Ebola.
- A team from the Ministry of Health comprising a Clinician, Infection Control Specialist and a Health Promoter attended training on Ebola management in Congo Brazzaville which was organized by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- In this environment of heightened surveillance, it is expected that there will be a number of suspected cases being reported in Zambia. So far, six such cases have been followed up and tested. All have tested negative

Communication

- Electronic and print media have continued to transmit Ebola sensitization messages.
- Information, Educative and communication (IEC) materials have been printed and distributed. More IEC materials are still to be produced.
- A Health Promotional Team conducted sensitization at the Levy Mwanawasa stadium in Ndola during the Zambia-Mozambique match that was held on 6th September 2014.
- The Government has continued to raise awareness and sensitize the public on the dangers of Ebola through radio and television programmes.
- Travel to and from Ebola affected areas remain restricted.

International Collaborations on Ebola

The Minister of Health, Dr. Joseph Kasonde and his Deputy, Dr Chitalu Chilufya attended International Conferences on Ebola. Dr Kasonde attended the SADC 2nd Extra Ordinary Meeting of Ministers of Health on Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in Zimbabwe whilst Dr. Chilufya attended the Africa Union (AU) meeting in Ethiopia.

At both meetings, it was agreed that surveillance was to be enhanced and that screening at entry points and public health systems needed to be strengthened.

False Alarm

A 33 year old patient was attended to by health workers in Mumbwa, Central Province with diarrhoeal symptoms. The patient claimed that he was a truck driver who had recently visited DRC where he had contact with a sick person in Kisangani.

However, further questioning revealed that the patient had never been to Congo. The patient who was Zambian with Zimbabwean parents has been in Mumbwa since January this year.

Upon further interview by immigration officers, he recanted his story and said it was his brother who was a truck driver. The patient was discharged on 8th September 2014.

Meanwhile, a 45 year old truck driver was arrested in Kasumbalesa after giving a false report that the owner of the truck he was with was an Ebola patient who was in quarantine in the DRC. The man gave details of another named truck driver as the one suffering from Ebola.

The purported Ebola patient was tracked down in Nakonde and expressed surprise at the allegations. After thorough medical investigations, he was found not to have any clinical presentation of Ebola.

Further investigations by the Police and Immigration officers determined that the driver who gave the false report did so to avoid paying toll fees to the Road Transport Safety Agency (RTSA).

UPDATE ON CHOLERA IN CENTRAL PROVINCE

Eight patients have been treated for suspected Cholera at Waya Health Centre after the disease broke out in Lukanga Swamps on of 30th August, 2014.

Of the eight people, there has been one death in the community and one patient died upon arrival at the Isolation Centre.

Four patients were discharged after testing negative of the disease. Two others that tested positive were treated and discharged after receiving treatment. Currently, there is no patient under treatment.

The Provincial Medical Office in Central Province has heightened surveillance in the area and has put up measures to contain the disease. Among the measures taken are:

- **Contact Tracing:** This is done to ensure that all household members of identified patients are equally investigated and given education to prevent them from catching the diseases.
- **Information Provision:** The community is being provided with information on how to avoid contracting the disease such as boiling water for drinking.
- **Distribution of Chlorine:** The Provincial Medical Office is also due to distribute chlorine to households to be used in water for drinking, cooking and other household use.



Issued by Dr. Dennis Mulenga
Acting Spokesperson
Ministry of Health
15th September, 2014