

# **Statement by World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim At Joint Press Conference on Ebola with Ghanaian Vice President H.E. Kwesi Bekoe Amissah-Arthur**

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**World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim  
Joint Press Conference on Ebola  
Accra, Ghana**

## **As Prepared for Delivery**

Good afternoon everyone. Thank you for coming. I'm very happy to be back in Accra. My last visit was almost exactly a decade ago, when I was working at the World Health Organization. Today, I have met with senior government officials, including Vice President Kwesi Bekoe Amissah-Arthur, and I will meet with the UN team based in Accra – UNMEER -- that is coordinating the Ebola response. I want to especially thank the government of Ghana for taking such an important role in the response to this outbreak – by being the host of UNMEER and by setting up a humanitarian air bridge into Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. History will record the importance of what Ghana has done – that it has kept open an important link to the three countries at a time when many countries around the world have closed their borders.

Today, I have an important announcement linked to the Ebola crisis. The World Bank Group will be making an additional \$100 million dollars available to fill a critical gap in the Ebola response – funding to speed up deployment of foreign health workers to Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

With this latest grant, the World Bank Group's funding for the Ebola fight over the last three months is now more than \$500 million dollars.

In recent weeks, the international response to Ebola crisis has improved significantly. We have had some good news recently out of Liberia, involving a drop in recorded cases, although we should watch this very closely as this epidemic has had a history of surge in numbers of cases. As for the overall response, several major gaps remain and one of the largest is mobilizing enough international health teams to the three countries in order to contain the epidemic. The health workers are needed to treat and care for patients, boost local health capacity, manage Ebola treatment centers, and resume essential health services for non-Ebola conditions.

Current estimates by the United Nations indicate that the three countries need about 5,000 foreign health workers to fight Ebola, who in the coming months will rotate through very difficult assignments in the expanding Ebola treatment centers, community-based care, burial teams, and laboratory services.

I have just spent the last three days in the Horn of Africa, where I heard some especially encouraging news about Africa's response to the Ebola outbreak. First, African Union Commission Chairperson Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma committed to help deploy 2,000 trained health workers from African countries to the affected nations. I commend Dr. Zuma and the Africa Union for taking a leadership role in setting a firm target to bring health workers from the continent to Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. And second, I heard from Kenya President Uhuru Kenyatta that 600 health workers in his country have volunteered to work in the affected areas. Many more African countries also are ready to send health workers to the frontlines of this epidemic. This kind of solidarity from Africa is what will beat this outbreak.

We now need to take such important pledges such as Dr. Zuma's and turn them into action. We need to find a way to manage and train health workers for their rapid deployment to the affected areas. We need to work with the affected countries, UNMEER, and the WHO to use our \$100 million dollars to help create a surge of trained health workers that we see so rarely – we saw it in the successful campaign to eradicate smallpox; we have seen it around the world in the efforts to eradicate polio; we saw it to a degree in the response to other outbreaks such as SARS and H1N1. But this surge is more complicated than any before it. This surge needs to be equal to the challenge of Ebola, and to do that it needs dedicated

health workers from around the world. They are heroes, and they will meet this challenge, which is unlike any I have ever seen.

I have no doubt that we can do this. We have no choice. We must contain this outbreak now.

Thank you very much. I'd now like Anthony Banbury, who Special Representative to the Secretary-General and Head of the UNMEER here in Ghana, to say a few words and then I'll be happy to take your questions.