



IFEH RESPONSE TO THE OUTBREAK OF EBOLA IN WEST AFRICA

The Africa Group of the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) is very concerned about the outbreak of Ebola on the African Continent. The outbreak of Ebola which has a high death rate took place in West Africa, affecting mostly Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. Fewer cases have been reported in Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This Viral Hemorrhagic Fever has recorded over four thousand deaths on the continent. This condition has also caused enormous strain and serious public health consequences to the African population and the World.

The Africa Group of the IFEH calls upon all Environmental Health Professionals on the continent to play an active role in the combating and spread of this virus. To this effect, the following is recommended:

- That Environmental Health Professionals develop national environmental health plans (NEHP) to combat the spread of the disease.
- NEHP must encompass an integrated approach with all other Public Health Professionals in the containment and combating the spread of the disease.
- Adequate and appropriate measures must be taken at all National points of entry for the screening and identification of suspects with the disease. The screening should be implemented for both the entry and departure of humans and animals suspected of being a host of the disease.
- Proper and safe measures in the handling of body fluids of infected persons including the disposal of human remains must be controlled to ensure containment of the disease. This should include the appropriate disinfection, transportation, treatment and handling of human remains at funeral undertakers and mortuaries.
- Tracing of contacts and referrals to public health facilities,
- On-going education of communities on the identification of the disease, signs and symptoms, mode of transmission and prevention of the disease, and
- Other measures considered appropriate for the containment and prevention of the disease.

The IFEH further pledges our full support to all our Members who are involved with the control of Ebola in their countries of origin. Particular support is given to Member States who are affiliated with the IFEH including our Members in Liberia and Nigeria, and all other environmental health professionals in countries across Africa that are affected by the outbreak. IFEH supports Members in the discharge of their duties, and recommends the highest degree of preventative action, ethical considerations and profound professionalism. We encourage you to take all precautionary measures necessary to safeguard your individual health, the health of your families and your communities. This is a battle that must be won by our professionals working with communities and other Public Health Professionals on the continent and globally.

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