

Ebola: UN health agency convenes ethical review of experimental drugs



A government health worker at the Kenema Ebola Treatment Centre in Sierra Leone attends to a victim. Photo: IRIN/Tommy Trenchard

11 August 2014 – The United Nations World Health Organization (WHO) today convened a meeting of ethicists and scientists to discuss on the use of experimental medicines in treating Ebola, three days after the agency declared the current outbreak of the disease in West Africa an international public health emergency.

WHO Spokesperson Gregory Hartl said via Twitter that the Geneva-based organization is planning a press conference at 2 p.m. Tuesday.

“The recent treatment of two health workers infected with the Ebola virus with experimental medicine has raised questions about whether medicine that has never been tested and shown to be safe in people should be used in the outbreak, and, given the extremely limited amount of medicine available, if it is used, who should receive it,” according to WHO.

The virtual meeting today will “develop a framework for how we should approach” the issue of untested drugs “because this is not a single drug issue; it is really a framework, which is potentially applicable to options as they come up... and then we hope that will provide solid directions for how to move on this group of issues,” Dr. Keiji Fukuda, WHO Assistant Director-General for Health Security, had told reporters last Friday.

At that time, WHO Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan declared the current outbreak of the Ebola a public health emergency of international concern, endorsing the unanimous recommendation made by Emergency Committee of International Experts on the current Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, and which has now spread to Nigeria.

“This is the largest, most severe, most complex outbreak in the nearly four decades history of this disease,” said Dr. Chan who also endorsed the temporary measures to reduce the spread of Ebola agreed upon by the Executive Committee and issues as a statement.

Regarding the issue of temporary travel bans, the Committee declared: “There should be no general ban on international travel or trade” but recommended restrictions regarding the Ebola-affected travellers.

15
 Like
 251
 Tweet
 2
 g+1
 16
 Share
 Print

Related Stories

- Ebola no longer 'localized emergency,' UN health officials tell regional summit in Cuba
- 'Science must have a place at the policy table,' world leaders urge at special UN meeting
- Ebola: UN to consult West African governments on coordinating global crisis response
- Ebola: back from outbreak epicentre, UN official says survivors now helping with care

In-depth Interviews

- Kanayo F. Nwanze, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development
- UN System Coordinator on Ebola

Press Releases Briefings

- [Budget Committee Approves \\$50 Million for United Nations Ebola Response Mission, Reviews Assessment Scale to Calculate Financial Contributions of Member States](#)
- [Budget Committee Adopts Work Programme of Current Session, Considers Proposed Funding for New United Nations Mission to Fight Ebola Outbreak](#)
- ['Every Day, Every Minute, Counts,' Warns World Health Organization Head at High-Level Meeting on Response to Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak](#)

As of 4 August 2014, the cumulative number of cases attributed to Ebola in the four countries stands at 1, 711, including 932 deaths.

WHO said the disease is affecting only a small part of the African continent, but the head of the UN health agency said there is “a clear call for international solidarity” to boost the capacity of the countries currently affected.

“Our collective health security depends on support for containment in support in these countries,” Dr. Chan said on Friday.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[UN declares Ebola outbreak global 'international public health emergency'](#)

Secretary-General

[All Statements](#)
[Selected Speeches](#)
[Off-the-cuff Remarks](#)
[Official Travels](#)

Spokesperson's Office

[Latest Statements](#)
[Briefing Highlights](#)
[Briefing Transcripts](#)
[Press Conferences](#)
[Notes to Correspondents](#)

Tools and Services

[Top Stories Archive](#)
[UN Daily News](#)
[UN System Links](#)
[Peacekeeping](#)
[Political Missions](#)
[Stories the World Should Hear More About](#)

[UN Publications](#)
[Maps](#)
[Databases](#)
[News Magazines](#)

Social Media

[RSS](#)
[Twitter](#)
[Facebook](#)
[Flickr](#)
[Subscribe](#)
[Contact](#)



[Copyright](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Notice](#) | [Site Index](#) | [Fraud Alert](#) | [Help](#)