

UN EMERGENCY FUNDING RELEASED TO SUPPORT EBOLA RESPONSE IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

(New York, 7 June 2020): UN Humanitarian Chief Mark Lowcock today released US\$40 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to help tackle health emergencies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The announcement came shortly after the Government confirmed a new outbreak of the virus in Mbandaka, in the northwestern province of Équateur. The DRC is fighting a prolonged Ebola outbreak and more than 2,200 people have lost their lives to the virus in the DRC since the outbreak started in the eastern Ituri, North-Kivu and South-Kivu provinces in August 2018.

The CERF funds will strengthen the DRC's existing health services to enable follow up support for Ebola survivors and establish community-based surveillance, alert and rapid response systems. They will also fund the delivery of food, shelter, water and sanitation support, and health, education and protection services.

On top of Ebola, the DRC is battling a dangerous mix of health and humanitarian crises, including the world's largest measles outbreak, massive internal displacement and insecurity, and the COVID-19 pandemic. As of 4 June, the DRC had recorded 3,494 cases of COVID-19 and 74 deaths.

The UN's Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock said:

"What is happening in the DRC is a stark reminder that the global community must not lose focus on the humanitarian crises that were present before the COVID-pandemic.

"If we take our eye off the ball in places like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, vulnerable people trapped in vicious cycles of suffering won't have a fighting chance in the face of COVID-19.

"I am grateful for the generosity of donors and urge them to continue to fund the fight against Ebola in DRC."

The DRC has several times this year come close to ending the outbreak of Ebola. The World Health Organization recommends waiting 42 days after the last person tests negative a second time before declaring the end of an outbreak.

Sustained efforts are needed to avoid further flare ups. This includes building on the DRC's capacity to fight Ebola, built during this outbreak, and strengthening its health system in line with the Government's plans for universal health care.

Today's \$40 million allocation builds on an earlier \$30 million to the DRC provided by CERF through its underfunded emergencies allocation window.

CERF is one of the fastest and most effective ways to help people affected by crises. Since its creation, it has assisted hundreds of millions of people with more than \$6.5 billion across 104 countries and territories. This would have not been possible without generous and consistent donor support.

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