



Ebola out-break mapping of the DRC, June 2019 from the World Health Organization (WHO, 2019)

## UNV's ebola emergency response to support WHO in DRC

WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus declared the Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). The declaration followed a meeting of the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee for EVD in the DRC. The Committee cited recent developments in the outbreak in making its recommendation, including the first confirmed case in Goma, a city of almost two million people on the border with Rwanda, and the gateway to the rest of DRC and the world. Afke Bootsman, UNV's Regional Manager for West and Central Africa, was on the ground in the region this week and writes about the UNV response here.

Last night I wrapped up my visit to Brazzaville. It coincided with the

announcement of the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. Today I am traveling back to my office in Dakar and I could not be more motivated and determined for the UN Volunteers programme (UNV) to support the Congolese Government, population and WHO in bringing an end to the spread of this deadly Virus.

Upon my arrival on Monday morning at the WHO Regional Office for Africa the news broke that the first Ebola case was confirmed in Goma. Not a good sign. I started meetings with the senior management, cluster directors and their teams to present the UNV programme and how it works. 'Ebola' has been a word that for obvious reasons has been used in each and every meeting. The brainstorming and reflections on how UN Volunteers can support WHO in its work in Africa and in particular in the DRC were rich and action driven.

Two years ago WHO and UNV started to explore more actively different ways of working together. In 2018 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between both organizations which has led to 40 UN Volunteers assigned to WHO operations in Africa including the Regional Office. Innovative initiatives are being launched to build sustainable capacities in the health sector through National UN Volunteer assignments of talented young graduates such as in Mauritania. WHO has now also solicited our support for the emergency response in the DRC.

“ *Now is the time to show solidarity with the people of DRC, not to isolate them.* - WHO Director General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus stated on twitter

UNV is committed to do what we can to provide the required support to WHO and the people in the DRC. In the days ahead we will be looking for women and men from the DRC and beyond who are available and willing to serve as UN Volunteer to be part of the Ebola response.

Already, assignments are out and we encourage qualified people with a passion for volunteering to apply:

<https://www.unv.org/special-calls/project-management-officer>

<https://www.unv.org/special-calls/planning-officer-3>

<https://www.unv.org/special-calls/partner-coordination-officer>

*Afke Bootsman is the Manager of the Regional Office of UNV for West and Central Africa, located in Dakar, Senegal. With UNV, Ms Bootsman promotes the role of volunteerism in support of the Sustainable Development Goals throughout the region. Previously she has been in charge of inter-agency programmes implemented in the aftermath of a conflict or disaster on behalf of UNDP in countries such as Lebanon, Haiti, Burkina Faso, Guyana and Solomon Islands. Ms Bootsman joined the UN as a Junior Professional Officer with a strong motivation to contribute to equal chances for women or men regardless of background. She is from the Netherlands, married and the mother of a young son.*



<https://www.unv.org/our-stories/un-volunteers-who-lead-efforts-stop-disease-outbreaks-africa>



West and Central Africa

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