

Sierra Leone & Guinea Concludes Cross Border Meeting on Cholera Prevention & Control



Group photo of the participants at the meeting



Senior Official at the opening of the meeting



Group work and discussion



Presentation of the Sierra Leone Situation

The Ministries of Health of Sierra Leone and Guinea conducted a 3 day cross border meeting on cholera and other priority diseases prevention and control, in Makeni Sierra Leone from 31 October to 2 November 2012. The objectives of the meeting were to facilitate a common platform to prepare for and respond to outbreak of cholera & other communicable diseases along their common borders. It specifically looked into analyzing data, sharing of surveillance information on epidemic, manage risk factors, share experiences and lessons learnt from recent outbreaks in their respective countries.

Dr Kisito Daoh, Chief Medical Officer of the Sierra Leone Ministry of Health and Sanitation opened the meeting. He underscored the importance of the meeting, noting that occurrence of outbreak in any one of the countries is of concern as they share a long common border with similar epidemiological and socio-economic milieu. The meeting was attended by senior officials of the two countries including the Paramount Chief of Bombali Seborra Chiefdom, WHO Representative in Sierra Leone, the Guinean Inspector General of Health and the Sierra Leone Director of Disease Prevention and Control. Other participants included technical officials from national and border districts, the WHO Inter-country Support Team of W/Africa, WHO and UNICEF Country Offices in Guinea and Sierra Leone, OXFAM/GB, Action contre la Faim, other NGOs and health partners in either or both sides of the borders.

Speaking on behalf of the UN family, Dr W. Alemu, WHO Representative in Sierra Leone stated that a multi-sectoral approach is crucial for the control of cholera and other epidemic prone diseases including diseases targeted for eradication such as polio. He said this can be achieved through strengthened coordination and collaboration within and between countries. He encouraged the delegates to make special reference to the IHR in their deliberations and to propose solutions to their common problems.

Technical presentations on priority diseases from both countries were made and discussions on the progress and challenges of surveillance activities and disease prevention and control with focus on the border districts. The main outcome of the meeting was an operational plan that was developed to strengthen cross border disease surveillance and response. The meeting was supported by WHO and UNICEF.



Plenary discussion