



## **WANEP COMMENDS SIERRA LEONE, CALLS FOR VIGILANCE ACROSS WEST AFRICA ON EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE**

**Press Release  
Freetown, 10 November, 2015**

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, WANEP, commends the Government and good people of Sierra Leone on the occasion of the World Health Organization's (WHO) certification of the country as free of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). WANEP recognizes the immense resilience demonstrated by the people and congratulates the various efforts and support systems provided to one another by the people of Sierra Leone.

As part of its efforts to promote human security, WANEP has monitored the devastating consequences of the virus in the country including the loss of 3,955 lives, infection of 14,089 people (including 5,118 females and 1,992 children between 0-14 years)<sup>1</sup> and near crippling of the economy following the withdrawal of foreign investment to the country since the spread of the virus in May 2014. WANEP expresses her in-depth condolences to the families who lost loved ones in the epidemic; and wishes the survivors total recovery from any health problems associated with the virus.

WANEP recalls that since the outbreak of the virus in the Forest region of Guinea in December 2013, an estimated 11,314 people have died while over 28,607<sup>2</sup> others are infected across the region especially in Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali and Nigeria. Furthermore, WANEP recalls the initial challenges encountered by the regional authority in attempts to contain the spread of the virus and commends the concerted efforts and resolve of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its member states to manage and eradicate the virus from the region.

While the celebration is of immense significance, it is imperative that caution is maintained to ensure the elimination of the virus from the region, as the presence of the virus in neighboring Guinea remains a threat to the entire region. To this end, WANEP calls for collaborative approaches to stamp out the virus from Guinea and proffers the following recommendations:

- Government and relevant stakeholders, particularly the health authorities and security actors should heighten security and health measures at shared borders to prevent a re-emergence of the virus.

<sup>1</sup> [www.who.int/ebola/current-situation](http://www.who.int/ebola/current-situation)

<sup>2</sup> [www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/en](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/en)

- Government should create necessary conditions to facilitate the prevention and management of potential human security threats in the country.
- In collaboration with international community, the government should support the Ebola survivors including those orphaned by the disease in the form of livelihood, education and integration into communities.
- Health Authorities should collaborate with the media to continuously create awareness about the disease and ensure the dissemination of adequate information to citizens.
- Civil society organizations should collaborate with government and relevant state agencies on initiatives that can facilitate rapid response to crisis.
- ECOWAS should strengthen communication and coordination mechanisms such as institutionalization of common rapid response teams to investigate and respond to potential threats to human security across the region.
- ECOWAS should continuously provide technical and financial support to member states especially Guinea in the fight towards eliminating the virus from the region.
- International institutions should support the Government of Sierra Leone in its efforts to rebuild its economy to ensure the return of foreign investors as well as diversify the economy to promote the prosperity of the nation and improve the standard of living of the people.

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*WANEP is a leading Regional Peacebuilding organization founded in 1998 in response to civil wars that plagued West Africa in the late 1980s. We place special focus on collaborative approach, working alongside major actors, particularly governments, intergovernmental bodies and women in a bid to establish a platform for dialogue, experience sharing and learning, thereby complementing efforts at ensuring sustainable peace and development.*

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