



**World Health
Organization**



International Civil Aviation Organization
Organisation de l'aviation civile internationale
Organización de Aviación Civil Internacional
Международная организация гражданской авиации
منظمة الطيران المدني الدولي
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29 August 2014

Subject: Public Health Emergency —
Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)

Action required: Take urgent action as appropriate

Dear Ministers of Health and Ministers Responsible for Civil Aviation,

We are facing a public health emergency of international concern. The outbreak of Ebola virus disease is unprecedented in its size, severity and complexity. This is an extraordinary outbreak that requires extraordinary measures for containment. Extensive and comprehensive mobilization of the international community is needed to support the affected States in responding to the outbreak.

Keeping the communication lines with the affected States open and accessible is of paramount importance for strengthening the public health response and protecting national economies, including travel, trade and tourism. Any measure implemented by a national authority needs to be well informed by the nature of the disease itself and well grounded in the applicable international instruments and obligations of States under the International Health Regulations and the Standards contained in the Annexes to the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

In accordance with the advice and recommendations of the Emergency Committee under the International Health Regulations, the World Health Organization **does not recommend any ban on international travel or trade.**

The fear surrounding the Ebola outbreak is understandable. However, **lives are being unnecessarily lost** because **health care workers cannot travel to the affected countries, and delivery of life saving equipment and supplies is being delayed.** Measures ranging from delayed provision of necessary authorizations and clearances, to restrictions on flights and passengers, and even overflights, seriously hamper the effectiveness of relief operations and could ultimately lead to increased suffering and death of people in the affected countries.

We know the mode of transmission of Ebola and how to stay protected. We have efficient measures to detect individuals who develop symptoms consistent with the Ebola virus disease and prevent further transmission. These measures are consistent with the International Health Regulations and are being put in place by many countries.

We urge you to ensure that any existing or future measures implemented in your State which impose restrictions on trade or travel are commensurate with and restricted to reducing the public health risk. The World Health Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization are ready to support you in responding to the challenges posed by this major public health emergency.

Accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of our highest consideration.



Dr. Margaret Chan
Director-General
WHO



Raymond Benjamin
Secretary General
ICAO