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MPTF OFFICE GENERIC FINAL PROGRAMME NARRATIVE REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: FROM 11/2014 TO 06/2015

<p align="center">Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening the National Ebola Response Centre (NERC) Secretariat Programme Number: 00092908 	<p align="center">Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results¹</p> <p>National</p>
<p align="center">Participating Organization(s)</p> <p>UNMEER</p>	<p><i>Priority area/ strategic results</i></p> <p>Multi-Faceted preparedness</p>
<p align="center">Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <p>Total approved budget as per project document: MPTF /JP Contribution: \$ 1,178,084.00</p> <p>TOTAL: \$ 1,178,084.00</p>	<p align="center">Implementing Partners</p> <p>National Ebola Response Centre Secretariat</p>
<p align="center">Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</p> <p>Evaluation Completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date: 03 03 2015 Evaluation Report - Attached <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date: 03 03 2015</p>	<p align="center">Programme Duration</p> <p>Overall Duration: 8 Months Start Date : 20 November 2014 Original End Date: 31 December 2015</p> <p align="center">Report Submitted By</p> <p>Name: Mohamed Kakay Title: Associate Crisis Manager Participating Organization (Lead): UNMEER Email address: Kakay@un.org</p>

¹ Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

FINAL PROGRAMME REPORT FORMAT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Ebola Response Centre (NERC), the Emergency Operations Centre at the national level in Sierra Leone faced human, technical and financial capacity challenges in responding swiftly and efficiently to the Ebola crisis. With phase two of the response, the *strengthening of the NERC Secretariat* proposal has enabled the NERC to hire over 30 core personnel to urgently man the NERC Secretariat and Plans Directorate and to provide support on the following:

- NERC implementation: *support to identification of needs and gaps and consequent review and adaptation of plans in collaboration with pillar working groups.*
- Monitoring of NERC implementation: *continue to establish and monitor key performance indicators.*
- Strengthened information-sharing: *set-up of laboratory and bed management coordination cells and linking these to the Situation Room.*
- Continue to strengthen the data gathering and analysis.
- Enhancing information management: *setting up guidelines and procedures for information flow from the Situation Room to the Field Operations Directorate and to the pillars.*

UNMEER worked hand in hand with the NERC Secretariat's to coordinate and enable decision making-processes to successfully halt outbreaks of EVD in most of the 10 of out 12 districts. The goal was to ensure coherence between the seven pillars that form the basis of the NERC's response plan. Currently, and due in part to the project, all the pillars are functional and an integral part of the NERC on a weekly basis.

The project also increased information availability and flow from the District Ebola Response Centre (DERCs) to the NERC. All documentations and pillar decisions have been made available and posted on the NERC Website. Performance indicators are being collected, and all national key performance indicators (KPIs) are now reported on a daily basis. Information Management Officers (IMOs) were deployed to all 12 DERCs in the country. With regard to strengthened information sharing, all districts are electronically reporting to the NERC. All data collected at District level and used at the NERC are now done by DERC personnel who were trained by UNMEER/NERC IMOs. The data is collected through Web and Mobile technology, which bring a consistency, remove human transcribing errors, and add automatic validation on the data, as a result, it allows aggregation of the data into a database. This mechanism has been operational since January and has been propagated to all the districts from January to March.

The project was also crucial in providing pivotal operational and ICT support to the NERC Situation Room and Plans Secretariat as office supplies, internet support and laptops were provided to the Situation Room personnel.

Moreover, as the focus shifts on the next phase, UNMEER Sierra Leone had partnered with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to maximize the response effort. UNMEER was facing a delay to support the District Centres in a timely manner and some of the support had required an administrative structure and oversight. Therefore, UNMEER had chosen CRS as an Implementing Partner for this project. To this end, CRS was allocated \$671,013 from the project budget to fulfil the request made by the District Officials to fast-track any request that will directly support the DERCs. Thanks to this project, the operational support has been thoroughly managed, while providing an accelerated provision and funding to the DERCs in a non-duplicative manner.

With UNMEER's closure date of 30th June, key actions to mount rapid response to actively contain EVD at the remaining hotspots in Kambia and Port Loko Districts, compounded with an imperative need to support the NERC remained a priority. To this end, based on a consultative process and existing support provided to the NERC, UNOPS Sierra Leone will act as a financial service provider and support system in the role previously provided by UNMEER. Upon MPTF's approval, funds will be available for UNOPS to support the NERC in three key aspects, after UNMEER's departure 1. Salaries for the NERC; 2. Operational support; 3. Financial support for Surges.

I. Purpose

The purpose of this proposal was to provide a support mechanism for the NERC as the Ebola Emergency Operation of the country. The main objective of the project was to support the coordination activities of the NERC at national and district levels; further strengthening cooperation and coordination for EVD response between national and international organizations, NGOs, UN organizations and Sierra Leone authorities at national and district level. The project focused on three set of activities:

1. Strengthened NERC Secretariat coordination and decision making-processes successfully halts outbreak/spread of EVD.
 - a. *Pillar coordination mechanisms strengthened through active engagement of seven NERC Pillar Liaison Officers / planners in pillar work.*
 - b. *Coordination units set up within NERC Situation Room.*
 - c. *Strengthened Planning and Coordination cell enables needs-based planning, strategic decision-making and monitoring.*
2. Improved information management which will informed planning for the response at national and district levels.
 - a. *NERC Secretariat strengthened through set up of Information Management and Reporting Cell; additional staff engaged in data collection, analysis and reporting.*
 - b. *Basic infrastructure for database management set in place at NERC.*
 - c. *Data collection support staff in place in all districts; supported by UNMEER Information Management Officers.*
3. EVD response operations facilitated at district level through support to DERC functions
 - a. *Command and control centres established in five additional districts*
 - b. *Fully equipped command centres in all 12 districts*

The purpose set by the project was well achieved as 20 core NERC personnel are functioning in different capacities to strengthen coordination and information flow from the DERC to the NERC (*vice versa*) to enable a more effective decision making processes.

II. Assessment of Programme Results

Outcome: As mentioned above, the project intended to strengthen the NERC Secretariat coordination and decision making-processes to successfully halts outbreak/spread of EVD; Improved information management, which will informed planning for the response at national and district levels and; EVD response operations facilitated at district level through support to DERC functions. To this end, the project budgeted for up to 32 staff to man the NERC Planning Secretariat and Situation Room. The project also intended to support the NERC with ICT, phone top-ups and office supplies. Concurringly, the DERCs

were also to be supported with rents, maintenance and daily operational cost. In exception of the phone top-ups, all planned activities and objectives stated above were achieved through an established system with the NERC fiduciary bureau (BDO.)

Output: In efforts to provide immediate support to the NERC Situation Room, seven Pillar Liaisons were brought on board in early November. Within delegated authority, the Pillar Liaison Officers' responsibilities include, but are not limited to, serving as a liaison between the respective pillars and the NERC Secretariat, while strengthening the coordination mechanism. The Pillar Liaisons achieved program objectives by providing strategic advice to the Secretariat based on the pillar recommendations. The Pillar Liaisons have ensured coherence between pillar response and the NERC (via the Secretariat) response effort. Moreover, the project enabled the payment of monthly salaries to the NERC to maximize their functional capacity by hiring an additional 13 core staff members as budgeted in the proposal. These staff members include 4 mid-level Data Analysis Officers, 1 mid-level Reporting Officer, 2 Junior ICT support staff, 3 Junior Data Clerks (NERC Data Collection), 3 Junior Liaison Officers (NERC Data Collection). The output of these staff members range from collecting data, training DERC IMOs, preparing daily evening brief to the National EVD delegates, mobilize and allocate resources to the DERC to planning and executing major surges for the response, in collaboration with the Rapid Response Team (*funded via another MPTF project [RRST]*). Core staff have also focused on the NERC data analysis process, which involves generating the weekly EVD dashboard, creating and maintaining 3W's (WHO, WHAT, WHERE), which has been instrumental to all partners and NGOs.

As the heart of the EVD response, the NERC also benefited from the allocation of ICT and office supplies worth over USD 36,000. Based on needs and assessment, over 40 laptops, office supplies, including office chairs, refrigerators, ID card printer, and miscellaneous ICT equipment such as wireless mouse, external PC monitors, GPS, external Hard Drives, extensions and Multi-Purpose Laser Printers, copiers & Scanner were provided on need basis to the NERC Situation Room and Plans Directorate .

As mentioned above, UNMEER also supported the Districts through an allocated amount of over USD 600,000 to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) as an implementing partner. With the proposal, CRS worked in collaboration with its partners, CAFOD and World Vision (WV), to increase the response capacity of the DERCs and DHMTs in the 12 rural districts of Sierra Leone in a non-duplicative manner. These activities include providing essential office equipment and furniture to meet gaps in needs; enhance effectiveness of communications by distributing satellite phones and providing top-ups cards to the DERCs. Moreover, CRS supported numerous DERCs/DHMTs participation in regional and cross-border meetings across the country. With the commencement of the raining season, rain gears were provided to field response teams in every districts. Requests fulfilled include, but not limited to, Radio equipment & installation for PHUs, funds for catering workshops, toner/ink cartridges, laptops, fridges, air conditioners, KVA generators, printers, laminating machines projectors, portable copiers, projectors, chairs, while providing funds for workshops, DSA, vehicle rentals and DERCs maintenance.

Qualitative Assessment:

The project has lived up to its title "*Strengthening the National Ebola Response Centre Secretariat by strengthening capacities for planning, implementing and monitoring the National Ebola Response Plan*" as 95% of the NERC Situation Room and Plan Secretariat staff are financed by this project. Most importantly the NERC will be supported after UNMEER's departure, as UNOPS will finance key areas for the last miles to stop the outbreak.

When the proposal was submitted few aspects were not envisioned as the mobile data collection and the recruitment of United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) IMOs were not introduced to the plan. Therefore, as

effort to strengthen the DERC's information management system – a large budget was allocated toward providing personnel to the effort. As an alternative to providing the DERCs IMs, UNMEER provided IM officers at the NERC, 12 IM officers were fully operational at the district level, in addition to providing over 700 mobile phones. The team developed web and mobile forms to assist in data collection for both levels of the response (district and national):

- Train data collectors on how to use the form on the mobile phones.
- Developed a data base that allows analyst to track trends and make operational decisions.
- As new information management officers were deployed in all districts, the same model was replicated at district level.

Moreover, the original proposal only envisaged 5 additional command and control centres being funded through this project. However, with the evolving district to district strategies, the funds for the districts was pooled along with our response partners to obtain maximum effectiveness of the response. Key point to note here is that since November 2014 when this proposal was submitted, more response partners have joined the Ebola fight and some of the initial assumptions made are no longer valid. Hence, the allocation of funds were prioritized jointly with the UK response partners and the NERC.

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

Using the **Programme Results Framework from the Project Document / AWP**s - provide details of the achievement of indicators at both the output and outcome level in the table below. Where it has not been possible to collect data on indicators, clear explanation should be given explaining why.

	<u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Outcome 1 MCA (13): Multi-faceted preparedness SO 5 Prevent Further Spread	MCA Description: <i>Strengthening the National Ebola Response Centre Secretariat by strengthening capacities for planning, implementing and monitoring the National Ebola Response Plan.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened NERC Secretariat coordination and decision making-processes successfully halt outbreak/spread of EVD. • Improved information management enables informed planning for response at national and district levels. • EVD response operations facilitated at district level through support to DERC functions. 		
Following Activities financed by Project Partner (UNMEER)			
Output 1 Indicator : 20 NERC Personnel contracted and salaries paid by UNMEER Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 20 NERC personnel salaries paid by UNMEER	20 NERC personnel salaries paid each month since November.	N/A	Financed by UNMEER Monthly Bank Receipts and Staff Attendance Sheet.
Output 2 Indicator: % of pillar meeting held regularly and reporting to NERC supported by NERC Secretariat Pillar Liaison Officers. Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 100% of pillars functional and reporting to NERC on weekly basis	100% of pillars are functional and reporting to the NERC on weekly and daily basis, as required.	N/A	All documentations and decisions of Pillars available and posted on NERC Website.

<p>Output 3 Indicator: # Staff engaged in bed and lab coordination unit. Baseline: 0 Planned Target: Four staff working in NERC within bed and lab coordination unit.</p>	<p>(100%) 4 staff working in NERC within bed and lab coordination unit.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Monthly Reports and minutes.</p>
<p>Output 4 Indicator: Response dashboard in place. Operational 3W in place. Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 100% of KPI's collected and functional 3 Ws in place.</p>	<p>KPI's are being collected. 43 out of 45 National KPIs are reported. 3W (who, what, where) is in place and shared with all active NGOs and key partners. KPI Improvements on-going.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>NERC/UNMEER Dashboard</p>
<p>Output 5 Indicator : # staff engaged in Information Management and reporting Cell Baseline: 0 Planned Target: Three staff working on information management. Regular reporting from pillar and districts functional.</p>	<p>(100%) 3 staff are in place and are fully functional.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>NERC/UNMEER Dashboard</p>
<p>Output 6 Indicator: Response data reported electronically aided by ICT infrastructure. Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 70% KPIs are reported electronically.</p>	<p>KPI are being collected. 100% of KPIs reports via Mobile data collection</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>NERC/UNMEER Dashboard</p>

<p>Output 7 Indicator: % of DERCs supported by information management officers. Baseline: 0 Planned Target: 100% of DERCs are supported by Information Management officers.</p>	<p>(100%) UNMEER/NERC Information Management Officers were deployed to all 12 DERCs in the country</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>NERC/UNMEER Dashboard</p>
<p>Output 8 Indicator : # additional Command and Control Centres established Baseline: 0 Planned Target: Five additional Command and Control Centres established.</p>	<p>Not achieved</p>	<p>Due to the Government’ support, along with the UK and other partners, funds were no longer needed to be allocated to this activities.</p>	<p>NERC/UNMEER Dashboard</p>
<p>Output 9 Indicator: # districts providing electronic reporting to NERC. Baseline: 0 Planned Target: All districts are electronically reporting to the NERC.</p>	<p>All districts are reporting electronically. Information collected is currently being reviewed by all response partners to support operational decisions and reporting.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>NERC/UNMEER Dashboard</p>

iii) Evaluation, Best Practices and Lessons Learned

The release of funds to the NERC was occasionally delayed as the creation of the Business Partner profile which was not executed in Sierra Leone but rather in Brindisi and New York.² This delay directly affects the release of funds to the NERC.

A rapid financial mechanism is needed to quickly fulfil approved request. The existing financial instruments available to UNMEER to respond to requests were not designed for the quick disbursement of funds which is often required. The time period involved in activating the project and releasing money for use is too long to allow UNMEER to support urgent time-sensitive activities that will help in Getting to Zero. To mitigate this problem it is crucial to apply a two-pronged approach:

- i. Pre-allocating all remaining funds to recipient UN Agencies, Funds or Programs in-country. This will remove the bottleneck of requesting funding from elsewhere.
- ii. Granting delegated authority to the recipient AFP in-country. The ability to approve transfers will considerably fast-track the release of funds to implementing Agency.

These two recommendations would need to be compounded by a rigid financial team who will oversee the disbursements of all funds, in addition to the respective Project Officers. To this end, the account ought to have a dual approval mechanism put in place to provide the clearest possible oversight and control of finances.

Further from the point made above, once funds are allocated within the delegated authority of the recipient agencies in Sierra Leone, it is in the best interest of the agency to provide an Assurance of Payments to the NERC if and when suitable. To this end, a greater accountability and transparency will be in place, since the NERC will only be reimbursed based on their signed list of all expenditures with the original or duly certified copies of receipts and invoices. However, it is important to note that, the NERC will not always have money available to pre-finance their approved projects, particularly if a number are required at the same time or in quick succession. In this instance projects of smaller value will get approved provided a project officer is identified to monitor the implementation.

²In order for funds to be transferred the Implementing Partner account must be created, otherwise known as the Business Partner Profile.