European Union supports Ebola preparedness in South Sudan

**Juba, 8 November 2018** - In response to the outbreak of Ebola virus disease in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the European Union is reinforcing preparedness measures in South Sudan. There is a risk of Ebola spreading to neighbouring countries given intense cross-border movements in the region. The EU is providing 7.4 million SSP (€50 000) in humanitarian funding to reinforce actions that can prevent transmission into South Sudan and help the country prepare for possible Ebola cases.

"To prevent the spread of the Ebola disease into neighbouring countries, we are helping South Sudan reinforce preparedness. Overall EU support includes technical expertise, humanitarian air service, research funding and humanitarian assistance. We are not letting our guard down and we will continue our support for as long as it takes. There is no other option but to win the fight against the virus," said EU’s Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides.

The EU funds will allow the South Sudanese Red Cross to reinforce preparedness and prevention in four areas which are all major entry points into South Sudan from the DRC and Uganda (Yei River, Yambio, Nimule and Maridi). 190 Red Cross volunteers will be trained in social mobilisation to reach communities with information and a public awareness campaign about the Ebola virus. The volunteers will also be trained to conduct safe and dignified burials. The EU funds will also be used for the prepositioning of needed stocks and medical supplies as well the construction of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities at the entry points.

The activities will benefit 108 000 people over the next three months.

The funding is part of the EU's overall contribution to the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

North Kivu, which is the epicentre of the outbreak in the DRC, is just 100 kilometres from the South Sudan-DRC border and 400 kilometres from Juba. Insecurity in eastern DRC is hindering efforts to contain the disease. The general health situation in South Sudan remains fragile and most health facilities are dilapidated, while management and human resource capacity is weak, coupled with continued insecurity and access constraints in the high-risk areas, rendering the country vulnerable.
should a viral disease break out.

Since this outbreak was declared on 1 August 2018, over 189 deaths have been reported in eastern DRC.

Background

About EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid

The European Union and its Member States are the world's leading donor of humanitarian aid. Relief assistance is an expression of European solidarity with people in need all around the world. It aims to save lives, prevent and alleviate human suffering, and safeguard the integrity and human dignity of populations affected by natural disasters and man-made crises.

Through its Civil Protection and Humanitarian aid Operations department (ECHO), the European Union helps millions of victims of conflict and disasters every year. With headquarters in Brussels and a global network of field offices, the EU provides assistance to the most vulnerable people on the basis of humanitarian needs.

About the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund

The European Commission has signed a €3 million humanitarian delegation agreement with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to support the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). Funds from the DREF are mainly allocated to “small-scale” disasters – those that do not give rise to a formal international appeal.

The Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) was established in 1985 and is supported by contributions from donors. Each time a National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society needs immediate financial support to respond to a disaster, it can request funds from the DREF. For small-scale disasters, the IFRC allocates grants from the Fund, which can then be replenished by the donors. The delegation agreement between the IFRC and ECHO enables the latter to replenish the DREF for agreed operations (that fit in with its humanitarian mandate) up to a total of €3 million.

For further information, please contact:

Anouk Delafortrie, Regional Information Officer, EU Humanitarian Aid Regional Office, Nairobi

Anouk.delafortrie@echfield.eu or +254 722 791 604

www.eeas.europa.eu

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