

## GLOBAL COMMUNITIES ALERT WEEKLY REPORT

### March 22 – Month 28, 2015

### SUMMARY

The most significant activity this reporting period was a cross-border meeting facilitated by Global Communities in Lola Guinea between district- and county-level officials, traditional leaders, and NGO representatives. This is a continuation in talks between Guinea and Liberia and the first such meeting between Nimba and Lola (see Annex A for more details). As **cross-border surveillance** and **Community Event-Based Surveillance** remain priorities, Global Communities is planning orientations in Gbarpolu and Bong for mid-April. Global Communities is also planning a TOT on its border surveillance toolkit in both Grand Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties during the next reporting period.

Global Communities supported 93 **safe and dignified burials this reporting period**, one of which was the final confirmed Ebola case in the country. Burial teams remain mobilized and active in all 15 counties and IFRC is still planning its phase-out of Montserrado activities to happen over the month of April. **CLTS activities** are ongoing in Bong, Nimba and Lofa and **border surveillance activities** continue to be the priority in all five counties bordering Sierra Leone and/or Guinea.

Global Communities M&E staff will be traveling over the next three reporting periods to all 15 counties to work with the County Data Officers on **improved reporting of dead body management data**. This is being done in close coordination with the MOH, who is also sending representatives to the field.

### 1. COUNTY-SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

#### Bong

With no new cases reported, **border surveillance/monitoring** continues to be a priority in Bong. gCHVs are fully deployed in all border communities with the Republic of Guinea, and carrying out monitoring of incoming and outgoing people. Two of the five **triage and screening stations** have been completed (Jorwah and Garmue). The third is to be completed on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. The last two will be done upon selection of the crossing points by the CHT.



*Construction of latrines is ongoing in many of Bong County's recently triggered CLTS communities*

In Zota and Panta-Kpaai health districts, **supplies were distributed to gCHVs** including thermoflashes, batteries and rainboots. **Social mobilization activities** linked to border surveillance are also ongoing as Global Communities held five clan and community meetings were in these districts. A total of 183 people attended the meetings including attendees from Guinea and other district and county health officials. **Burial teams** remain active and all swabs collected were negative.

GC continues to promote **CLTS activities** throughout Bong. To date, all 28 triggered communities have dug a total of 224 pits. This reporting period CLTS communities built 21 new dish racks, bringing the total to 408 in all communities. 63 new clotheslines were put up this period totaling 438. 160 of the 224 pits have latrine superstructures and 55 total latrines are in use in the 28 communities.

## Gbarpolu

During this reporting period, contact tracers visited 67 communities and 814 households in Gbarpolu County and referred 106 other cases to five clinics. Follow up of the cases referred to clinics ongoing in the county.

**Border surveillance activities**, including at formal checkpoints, are ongoing in Kongba District with contact tracers presently monitoring the district's five surveillance check points. **Burial teams** remain active but most burials in the county are conducted by community and family members.

## Lofa

The highlight of activity during the reporting period was a two-day training workshop **Community Event-Based Surveillance** supported by GC and other partners (IOM, WHO) conducted from March 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> in Voinjama. This meeting brought stakeholders together to review the cross-border protocols and standard operating procedures (SOPs) and to discuss how these tools can be incorporated into Lofa County cross-border surveillance and monitoring activities. Participants from BIN, Joint Security, MIA (Commissioners, Paramount chiefs, Clan chiefs, Traditional leaders, etc), MOH and local and International NGOs attended.

GC burial and disinfection teams assigned in four districts (Zorzor, Voinjama, Kolahun, and Foya) continue to conduct **safe and dignified burials** in the six health districts and Quardu and Gbondi administrative districts. The GC swab transportation vehicle continues to transport swabs taken from bodies to Gbarnga for testing. All swabs collected were negative for this reporting period.

The GC CLTS Focal Person held a meeting with the Chairman of the County Steering Committee to discuss pending **CLTS activities** and to submit six Letters of Interest collected from communities in both Voinjama (Zango town, Jarmulor, Gbegbedu, and Womanor) and Kolahun (Nyaquoitahun, Yengbalahun) Districts.

A MOU for GC support to the County Health Team **cross-border surveillance/screening at 33 primary and secondary border checkpoints** was signed between GC represented by the Country Director and the CHT represented by the County Health Officer. The MOU covers an initial three months period with possible review and extension and covers staff incentives and logistics.

## Margibi

This reporting period, **active case searchers** in Margibi County reported a total number of eight potential cases but all specimens taken came back negative. Active case searchers also reported a total of eight dead bodies which were given **safe and dignified burials** by the GC-supported Margibi Burial Team. They also identified 17 **EVD survivors** in Firestone District.

Due to resistance that active case searchers face within communities, the Margibi County Health Team and Internal Affairs are planning a meeting with traditional leaders and the EVD taskforce to get community buy in to support the County Health Team’s active case finding.

## Nimba

The main activity this reporting period was a GC-supported the **cross border meeting** (see Annex A) in Lola, Guinea on March 24<sup>th</sup>. Participants from the health sector, local governments, UN and local and international NGOs from both countries attended. The both countries presented their strategies on combatting EVD and how they intend to improve bilateral border surveillance. Both counties highlighted coordination and surveillances as major strategies for stopping the EVD in both countries.



*Leaders from Nimba and Lofa, including traditional, at the cross-border meeting*

GC has initiated support for **border surveillance activities** in 23 communities and three official check points (Thou, Ganta and Bolawee) through provision of supplies and Ebola prevention materials as well as vehicle support. There are 46 community volunteers working to ensure screening and monitoring of people in and out of border communities.

The GC is still providing support to the county through **safe and dignified burials** with one burial conducted this reporting period. The County Team also conducted assessments of five funeral homes in Sanniquellie, Ganta, Saclepea and Tappita. GC is still awaiting the team report.

The GC team conducted an investigation with youth and women groups in Sehyikimpa town to observe the level of **sanitation improvement** in the community. The team found out the latrines are currently in use and properly maintained. 75% of the existing latrines have tippy taps and latrine pit covers. Fencing of hand pumps and garbage pit digging are in progress.

## Rivercess

The GC team held two community meetings in Challoe and Gyagbenken to highlight **community cleanup campaigns**. The Town Chiefs expressed that the EVD outbreak disrupted the previously set date for the campaign kickoff and now wish to propose new start dates. Monitoring of the community **hygiene and sanitation activities** is ongoing under IWASH/ UNICEF.

GC continues to support **safe and dignified burials** and all swabs collected during this reporting period were negative.

## Sinoe

The Sinoe CHT continues to hold EVD technical meetings while response activities are gradually slowing down as there have been no confirmed cases since December. The meeting this reporting period focused on measles cases in Tarjawon District, particularly in Kapo Town.

**Active measles case search and community engagement activities** for parents and caregivers of children less than five are ongoing.

GC continues to support **active case search**. There were three suspected cases with all results negative. No deaths were reported. GC is providing **logistical support** to the County Response Team and the CHT with ambulance service and case management service.

## 2. CASE MANAGEMENT DATA

### 2.1 Ambulance Support

Current Ambulance Presence			
County	#	County	#
Bomi	2	Margibi	2
Bong	1	Maryland	1
Gbarpolu	1	Montserrado	1
Grand Bassa	2	Nimba	2
Grand Cape Mount	5	Rivercess	2
Grand Gedeh	0	River Gee	0
Grand Kru	2	Sinoe	2
Lofa	1	<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>

The amount and location of ambulances remained the same from last reporting period.

### 2.2 Burial/Disinfection Team Support

Current Burial/Disinfection Team Support							
County	GC	IFRC	GC	County	GC	IFRC	GC
	Burial		Disinfection		Burial		Disinfection
Bomi	2		0	Lofa	4		0
Bong	3		2	Margibi	2		0
Disco Hill	7		2	Maryland	1		0
Gbarpolu	3		0	Montserrado	17	12*	7
Grand Bassa	3		0	Nimba	4		4
Grand Cape Mount	5		5	River Cess	2		0
Grand Gedeh	1		0	River Gee	1		0
Grand Kru	1		0	Sinoe	1		0
<b>Total</b>					<b>57</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>20</b>

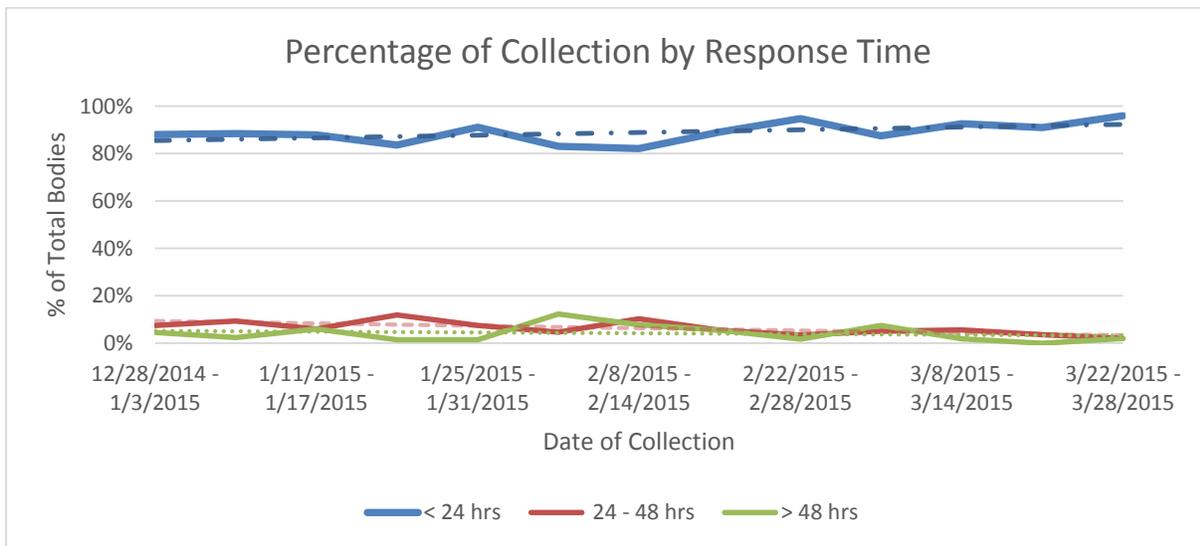
\*IFRC is still planning to phase out burial teams in Montserrado County and Global Communities will assume responsibility for supporting all burials. This is expected to happen over the course of April.

### 2.3 Dead Body Management

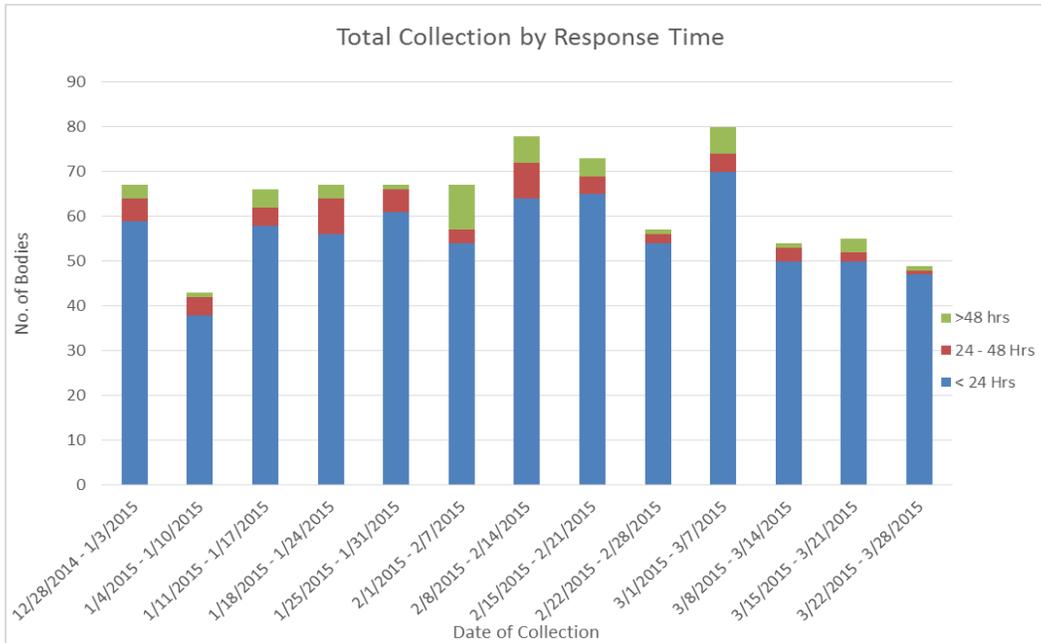
#### 2.3.1 Overall Burial Statistics

Total Burials Reported			
County	Total	County	Total
Bomi	10	Margibi	5
Bong	9	Maryland	0 reported
Gbarpolu	0 reported	Montserrado	49
Grand Bassa	0 reported	Nimba	1
Grand Cape Mount	6	Rivercess	0 reported
Grand Gedeh	0 reported	River Gee	3
Grand Kru	0 reported	Sinoe	0 reported
Lofa	10	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>93</b>
Updates		Prev. Reported	Update
March 15-21		103	110
March 8-14		140	141

### 2.3.2 Montserrado County Burial Statistics

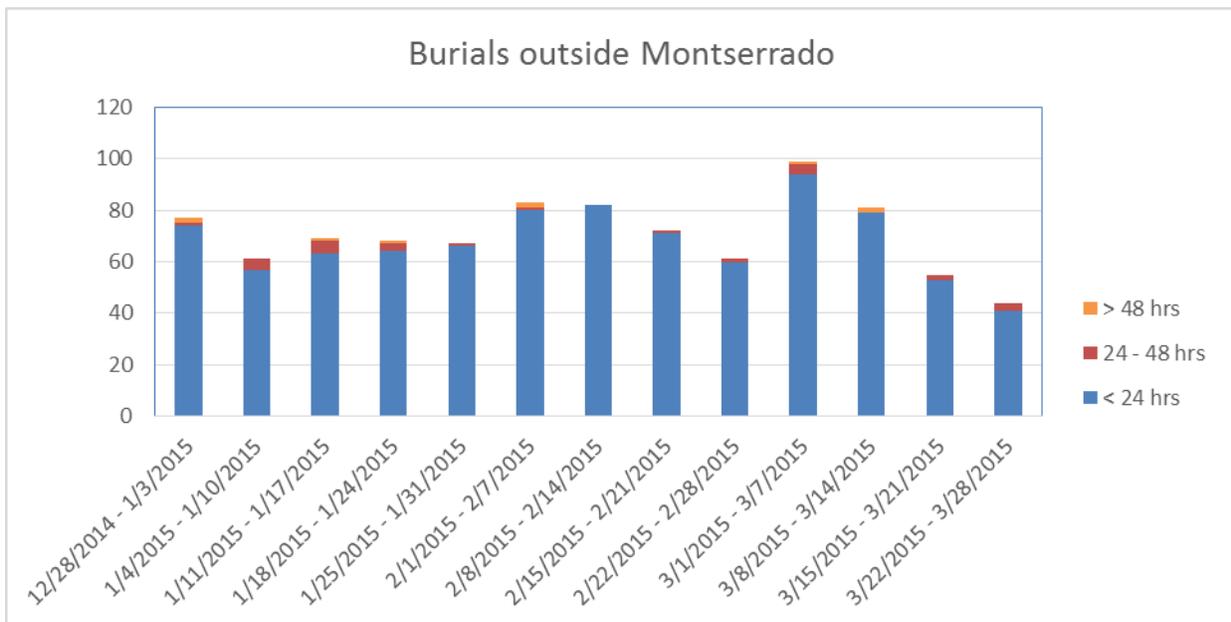


This reporting period, Global Communities supported 49 burials in Montserrado County, a slight decrease from the previous reporting period.



96% of burials were conducted within 24 hours of death this reporting period, slight improvement of 2% in response time from the previous reporting period.

### 2.3.3 Non-Montserrado County Burial Statistics

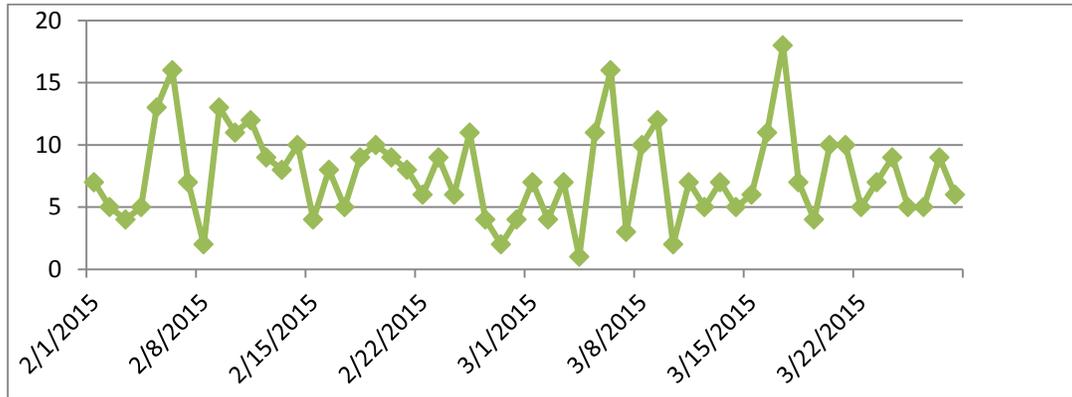


This reporting period, Global Communities supported 44 burials outside of Montserrado County with the highest numbers taking place in Lofa (10), Bomi (10) and Bong (9). 41 of these burials took place within 24 hours of death.

### 2.4 Safe Burial Site

Date	# Buried	By Religion		By Sex			By Point of Origin		
		CH	M	F	M	Unrep.	ETU	Community	Hospital
<b>Total</b>	736	600	136	268	422	46	111	349	276
<b>Percent</b>	100	82	18	37	57	6	15	47	38

Burials per Day at Disco Hill



This reporting period, Global Communities **supported the burial of 46 bodies at Disco Hill**, an average of 6.5 burials per day – almost three per day lower than the last reporting period. Two bodies came from an ETU and of the remaining bodies, 22 came from communities and 22 came from hospitals. One of the burials from the ETU was the last confirmed Ebola case in the country.

## **ANNEX A: GUINEA AND LIBERIA PUBLICALLY DISCUSS THE IMPORTANCE OF BORDER SURVEILLANCE AND COORDINATION**

By Stephen Farshing, Global Communities

### ***Cross-Border Meetings***

#### **SANNIQUELLIE, LIBERIA –**

On March 24th Global Communities staff attended an historic bilateral meeting on cross-border surveillance in Lola, Guinea. This was the first of six such official bilateral gatherings between Nimba and Lola and the latest in a series of talks held between the two countries to strategize on how to best monitor borders and ensure Ebola does not cross unnoticed. Two similar meetings have been



*Hundreds welcome the Liberian delegation to Bossou, Guinea*

held in Lofa and one in Bong. The meeting in Lola represents a continuation of collaboration between both countries on cross-border surveillance and demonstrates that all three bordering counties of Liberia are now actively engaged with the Guinean government. Three talks will be held in each country and the next is planned for next week in Sanniquellie-Mah District, Liberia.

### ***Nimba-Lola Situation***

Last June, Nimba County reported its first Ebola case in Ganta City and has since reported 329 confirmed cases and 157 deaths in five of its six health districts. Sanniquellie-Mah, which shares a border with Guinea, was Nimba's hardest hit district. The last confirmed case, which traveled from Guinea, died on December 25th and no cases have been reported since in Nimba. Lola Prefecture has reported 97 confirmed cases with 75 deaths to date, representing a 77.3% fatality rate.

Nimba County has generally porous borders with nine official border crossings and 49 border communities, 21 of them along the Guinean border. Communities on each side are closely related, both socially and economically and pass freely, underscoring the necessity of improved and well-coordinated border surveillance.

### ***First Bilateral Meeting in Lola***

The key representatives for the Liberian delegation included Nimba County Inspector, Reginald Mehn and Nimba County Superintendent, Fong Zuagele. Paramount Chief for Sanniquellie-Mah District, Alan Flomo and Chief Peter Barlon, Chairman of the Nimba Chapter of the Traditional Council also attended in addition to national police and NGO (Global Communities, LNRC, WHO, CHES, IOM, DRC, UNMEER, CDC) representatives.

Upon arrival at the border, the townspeople of Bossou welcomed the delegation with cheering, singing and dancing. The Governor of N<sup>o</sup>zerekore and the Prefect of Lola welcomed the

delegation among the cheering crowd expressing excitement and gratitude for the visit. When Nimba Superintendent Zuagele addressed the crowd in the local language he said “We are the same people. We speak the same language. You are my brothers and I am your brother. I am humbled and grateful to be here today to work toward a collective solution to our situation.”

While this one-day meeting is only the first step to solve this issue, it represents an important step for both countries.



*The Prefect of Lola welcomes the Liberian delegation*



*The Nimba Superintendent addresses the crowd in the local language*

“Thank you to the representatives for asking for this meeting. It shows how we can cooperate to fight Ebola. It shows how Liberia cares for Guinea and how Guinea cares for Liberia,” stated the Lola Prefect. He continued, “Both of our presidents know we need to fight together. The Superintendent of Nimba even addressed us in our local language at the border. We share the same interests, traditions, culture and love for one another. Let us gather today and talk about reality. Let’s talk about how to fight Ebola. . . Ebola is not just a health issue. It is a social and economic issue as well. We need to stay vigilant. We need to remain awake to ensure that Ebola is nothing more than a bad memory.”

Nimba Superintendent Zuagele noted that his one-year tenure as Superintendent has been a challenging year as he was inaugurated just before the outbreak. He also expressed gratitude to local and international partners and the United States Government for standing with Liberia throughout its fight against Ebola. “We could not have made this progress without you,” he said. “We are also

grateful to be received by the people and government of Guinea,” he continued. “As leaders we must exercise flexibility. This is an unusual enemy that requires an unusual strategies to defeat it. We must avoid unnecessary bureaucracy and take real action if we are to be successful. . . Ebola has no regard for international boundaries. We have boundaries but we are the same people. We must embrace this and fight this common enemy together.”

Both delegations presented on their counties' current epidemiological situations, challenges and recommendations. Coordination of interventions between NGOs that do similar work remains the biggest challenge according to Guinean officials while improved information sharing was identified as a barrier by both delegations. The Guinean delegation also noted that they lack access to resources that allow them to disinfect all houses affected by Ebola.

The Liberian delegation suggested providing regular situation reports between counties and training the border communities, especially those affected by Ebola, in contact tracing and active case finding as a way of improving information sharing. Continued support for gCHVs, community mobilization with strong involvement of traditional leaders and CHTs as well as support for public health facilities on both sides were other recommendations by the Liberian delegation. "We have already been doing this in Grand Cape Mount with great success and can do it here as well," noted C-Paul Yanzi, CHT Lead for Nimba.



*Dr. Esther Muwanduzi, WHO, presents on Nimba's current border surveillance structure*



*The Nimba County Inspector is honored by the Guinean delegation and dressed in traditional clothing as a show of goodwill*

### ***Global Communities Cross-Border Support Efforts***

Currently Global Communities is rolling out a comprehensive cross-border response in Liberia's five counties that border Sierra Leone and Guinea supporting activities both at formal and informal border crossings. For formal crossings Global Communities is providing supplies and materials to assemble screening and triage stations, training human resources and staff at the stations as well as helping develop screening protocols and referral mechanisms for travelers showing symptoms. So far, Global Communities has provided such support for three official crossings in Nimba and six in Gbarpolu, five in Bong and nine in Lofa.

In addition to WASH and preventative activities in border communities Global Communities promotes increased vigilance by working with the CHTs and gCHVs to implement Community Event-Based Surveillance (CEBS). CEBS is an approach to strengthen monitoring and surveillance at informal crossings, adapted from Sierra Leone and put into the Liberian context by CDC and IMS. Global Communities is in the process of holding orientations and trainings on CEBS in the five counties that border Sierra Leone and Guinea. CEBS focuses on using existing structures and working with community leadership, including traditional leaders, to empower all members of a community to observe and report any “trigger events” that suggest they may be at risk for Ebola. This approach of supporting both formal and informal crossings is something that can hopefully be shared during the next five meetings and implemented on the Guinean side following meetings.

**CEBS Trigger Events:**

1. Multiple family/household members have fever or die within seven days of each other.
2. Anyone has fever or dies within three weeks of participating in an unsafe burial.
3. Any healthcare worker/healer has fever or dies of an unknown cause.
4. A traveler returning to or leaving village has fever or dies.
5. Any contact of a suspected EVD case gets fever or dies.
6. Any unsafe burial/washing of dead body took place in village or surrounding village

**Next Steps**

Guinean and Liberian officials agreed that three general recommendations will be critical for success in this final period of the epidemic: 1) Reinforcing the community approach to prevention, surveillance and education on Ebola; 2) Holding regular cross-border meetings with health, political and security officials as well as traditional leaders and NGOs and; 3) Continuing work to dismantle false rumors and misconceptions about the virus. “There were many rumors at the onset of the outbreak. Had the County not stepped in to dispel them, we would still be in the middle of the outbreak,” noted Dr. Esther Muwanduzi from WHO.

While this meeting did not touch on many of the technical details or action plans to enhance border monitoring and surveillance, it shows that both countries are willing to talk seriously and engage in productive dialogue about the issue. The meeting ended on an encouraging note.

“We must continue to focus on how to end Ebola together and how we can live together after Ebola. There will be many more meetings between our countries,” said the Governor of N’zerekore.

Nimba Inspector Mehn responded: “It has been a memorable experience since we arrived at the border today. We look forward to returning the same warmth and kindness that the Guinean people have shown us when you come to our country. I look very much forward to our continued cooperation long into the future.

