
'Zero Ebola infection' target requires long-term resources - ECA Chief

Addis Ababa, 17 February 2015 (ECA) - The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, Mr. Carlos Lopes has welcomed the declaration of Heads of State and Government of the Mano River Union, issued at their Summit this week on “adopting common strategies to end the Ebola Virus Disease epidemic in the subregion and addressing the post Ebola socio-economic recovery needs.”

Mr. Lopes, who is on an official visit to Liberia, said the Heads of State’s commitment to achieving “a Zero Ebola infection” within 60 days, effective 15 February 2015, is “an achievable goal; however, it requires concerted efforts and resources.”

“This declaration comes on the heels of several calls by African leaders as well as the African Union’s Summit in January,” said Lopes. He added that the debt relief commitment by the International Monetary Fund of US\$ 100 million for the three countries over the next 2 years, through a Trust Fund for Assistance and Disaster Response, “constitutes a welcome first step in the process of debt cancellation.”

Mr. Lopes has been at the fore front of the call for debt cancellation, following several visits to the subregion in 2014 and a subsequent study conducted by the organization he heads, the ECA, on the case for the cancellation of external debt for Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Conakry.

“Current initiatives, such as the recent IMF debt relief effort offers hope of opening doors for similar agreements with other bilateral and multilateral creditors. Real relief, however in the form of debt cancellation is what these countries need,” he stressed. Lopes also noted that cancellation of external debt would give the three countries the breathing space needed to plan for long-term recovery.

Held in Guinea Conakry on 15th February 2015, the Summit was attended by Presidents Alpha Conde (Guinea); Elen Johnson-Sirleaf (Liberia); Ernest Bai Koroma (Sierra Leone) and Minister Charles Koffi Diby, representing President Alassane Ouattara.

More: Download the study and the case for debt cancellation documents here: <http://www.uneca.org/impact-ebola-virus> [1]

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