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*Please address all correspondence to the Public Health Commissioner*

*14<sup>th</sup> August 2014*

## **Communiqué on Ebola from Public Health Authority**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of August 2014, after a two day meeting of experts, WHO declared that the outbreak of Ebola is now classed as a Public Health Event of International Concern. (PHEIC).

The report from WHO highlighted what states with local transmissions, States with a potential or confirmed Ebola Case, unaffected States with land borders with affected States and all states.

Seychelles falls in the last category and the recommendations for such states are as follows:

### **All States**

*There should be no general ban on international travel or trade; restrictions outlined in these recommendations regarding the travel of EVD cases and contacts should be implemented.*

*States should provide travelers to Ebola affected and at-risk areas with relevant information on risks, measures to minimize those risks, and advice for managing a potential exposure.*



*States should be prepared to detect, investigate, and manage Ebola cases; this should include assured access to a qualified diagnostic laboratory for EVD and, where appropriate, the capacity to manage travelers originating from known Ebola-infected areas who arrive at international airports or major land crossing points with unexplained febrile illness.*

*The general public should be provided with accurate and relevant information on the Ebola outbreak and measures to reduce the risk of exposure.*

*States should be prepared to facilitate the evacuation and repatriation of nationals (e.g. health workers) who have been exposed to Ebola.*

The Ministry of Health has been following the outbreak very closely and for the most part been taking the necessary actions, as per WHO recommendations.

Several measures are being in place and intensified.

- Intensification of surveillance at the ports of entry and within the country
- Dissemination of information to the medical fraternity online, through lectures, training, etc
- Training of various cadres of health care workers in infection control, use of personal protective gears, case management etc



- Dissemination of information to the public by phone, Audiovisual and print media.
- Advisory to the population to refrain from travelling to affected countries
- Passport verification at port of entry for travel to affected countries in last 28 days
- Introduction of a new health check form at the airport
- Surveillance of passengers who have returned from affected countries for at least 21 days after arrival in Seychelles.

The latest update from WHO 11<sup>th</sup> August 2014 has indicated that in spite of all ongoing efforts, the Ebola epidemic remains out of control in West Africa, more specifically in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea and Nigeria. It is regrettable that some Seychellois citizens are still travelling to these countries for non-emergency reasons.

Therefore, The Public Health Authority has to intensify measures being taken to further limit the chance of introduction of the Ebola virus in Seychelles.

**With immediate effect:**

1. All Seychellois citizens will not be allowed to travel without the expressed permission of the Public Health Commissioner, to Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea and Nigeria until the outbreak has been declared over by WHO.
2. Citizens of the countries mentioned at (1) and any other foreign nationals who work in Seychelles, and leave Seychelles to go to the listed countries



at (1) will not be allowed to re-enter Seychelles until the outbreak has been declared over by WHO.

3. Seychellois citizens are to be discouraged from travelling to West African region. This applies not only to countries that border the affected states, but also others in the region. (*Namely: Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mali, Benin, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Congo, D.R. Congo, Gambia, Mauritania, Senegal* ). Citizens of these aforementioned countries are required to apply for a VISA prior to being granted permission to enter Seychelles.
4. Furthermore, citizens are strongly discouraged from attending any gatherings that may put them into close contact with potentially infected individuals.
5. Active surveillance will be intensified for all passengers (any nationality) who enter Seychelles after having been to any of these four countries (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea and Nigeria) and any other countries which declare to have registered local ebola transmission in future.

This advisory will be revised from time to time depending on circumstances and progression of the Ebola outbreak.

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