

PRESS RELEASE

Welthungerhilfe: New study shows serious implications of Ebola

Ebola areas threatened with hunger crisis

Bonn/Freetown, 18th September 2014. Ebola-affected Sierra Leone is now also facing the threat of famine. A new study from Welthungerhilfe has concluded that, by the beginning of 2015, the effects of the Ebola epidemic in Sierra Leone could have an even more dramatic impact than the illness itself. “From March, we are anticipating serious hunger”, warns Jochen Moninger, Sierra Leone country coordinator for the last four years.

“The region is one of the poorest in the world. We must be prepared to provide large-scale food relief, to improve the health system, to establish an early warning system”, emphasises Moninger. The food prices in rural areas are increasing rapidly, due in part to the fact that transports are only allowed at certain times during the day. In order to contain the epidemic, whole villages have been isolated and in some epicentres the food supplies are running low. This year, it was only possible to cultivate around 40 percent of the fields.

“The economy has already collapsed: foreign firms have left the country and where local markets exist they are constricted. In order to stop the further spread of the epidemic, trade and traffic routes are not permitted to be used”, describes Moninger of the situation on the ground.

Before the outbreak of the epidemic, Sierra Leone was recording a positive economic growth. Through the external shock of the Ebola epidemic, the country’s economic growth has been set back significantly. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the impact of the Ebola outbreak could have effects similar to the tsunami in South-East Asia in 2004, when more than 200,000 people died.

Jochen Moninger is available for interviews.

Further information can be found at www.welthungerhilfe.de

Welthungerhilfe is one of the biggest private aid organisations in Germany. It provides aid from one source: from fast emergency aid and reconstruction to long-term development cooperation projects with local partner organisations, based on the principle of helping people to help themselves. Since its foundation in 1962, more than 7,350 projects in 70 countries have been supported with 2.66 billion Euro – for a world without hunger or poverty.

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