

## **Ebola: Russia Gives Funds, Builds Treatment Center**



**By Kester Kenn Klomegah**

**MOSCOW, January 21, 2015 (Business Africa)** – As part of a broader effort to help fight against further spread of Ebola epidemic virus, UC RUSAL, a leading global aluminium producer, announces the successful completion of the construction of the "Centre for epidemic and microbiological research and treatment" in the Kindia administrative region in the republic of Guinea.

The Centre will support Guinea's national health system and help fight the spread of the Ebola virus. The opening ceremony which took place on January 17, 2015 was attended by President of Guinea, Alpha Conde.

"The Centre for epidemic and microbiological research and treatment" is located at the former Soviet-Guinean Institute Pasteur in Kindia and is among the most modern centers to combat viral diseases in West Africa. Its primary focus will be to conduct research on infectious and highly dangerous diseases and their detection, treatment and prevention.

The Centre's premises include an infection hospital, a provisional hospital, a mobile laboratory and a blood and plasma transfusion department with a laboratory. The Centre will initially serve as a hospital for the treatment of those infected with the Ebola virus.

According to the official press release made available to Business Africa, RUSAL is the only public company globally to initiate a major construction project to help fight the spread of Ebola. The Company's investment in the construction of the Centre amounts to over \$10 million.

As one of the largest investors in the Republic of Guinea, RUSAL is actively supporting the Government in its fight against Ebola. In April 2014, RUSAL donated medicines, sanitary and hygiene items to the Guinean Ministry of Health. In October 2014, RUSAL donated special thermometers which remotely measure temperature to the management of the autonomous sea port of Conakry, where sanitary posts are deployed.

In addition, RUSAL supports all Russian Government initiatives, aimed at helping Guinea to combat Ebola. Since August 2014, RUSAL has provided logistical support to a special anti-epidemic team of the Russian Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Wellbeing also referred to as "Rospotrebnadzor" and a mobile anti-epidemic research laboratory in Guinea.

In November 2014, RUSAL was actively involved in deploying a mobile 200-bed hospital for the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, which was donated to the Republic of Guinea in accordance with a decision by the President of Russia. RUSAL organised the unloading of three Russian aircrafts, which delivered equipment for the mobile hospital to Guinea, as well as ensuring the safe transportation of the cargo under escort to its place of storage. RUSAL prepared the site for the hospital, provided accommodation for Russian military medics and provided them with the required resources.

"We are very grateful for the generous contribution of the Russian Federation, its President and UC RUSAL. It is a great honour to accept this valuable contribution, which will significantly help us in the fight against Ebola. On behalf of the people of Guinea, I offer my sincere thanks," President of Guinea, Alpha Conde stated at the opening ceremony.

"We strive to provide full support to the Republic of Guinea, not only in the fight against the Ebola virus, but also in activities related to strengthening their national health system as a whole in order to successfully prevent the spread of life-threatening diseases in future," Vladislav Soloviev, CEO of RUSAL said in remarks.

It's important to note that RUSAL has been present in Guinea since 2002. The Company owns Compagnie des Bauxites de Kindia and Friguia Bauxite and Alumina Complex. In June 2014, RUSAL announced the start of works to develop Dian-Dian, the world's largest bauxite deposit with reserves of 564 million tonnes.

## **Financial Contribution**

In addition to above efforts on the part of RUSAL, Russian Government will allocate \$8 million to assist international efforts to fight the Ebola virus, the Russian government said January 21, 2015.

"To ensure Russia's participation in international humanitarian efforts to fight the Ebola disease in the Republic of Guinea, the Republic of Liberia and the Republic of Sierra Leone, federal budget funds have been allocated in 2015," the release on the Russian government's website said.

According to the official release, \$2 million will be directed to the World Health Organization (WHO), with another \$2 million to be given to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The World Bank Group's emergency response to the Ebola crisis will receive \$3 million from Russia, while the UN Ebola response efforts will receive from a funding of \$1 million.

As of January 2015, the UN has already received about \$1 billion or two-thirds of the sum previously requested. However, the same amount needs to be transferred to the UN's World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and the World Food Programme to put an end to the epidemic. The United Nations requires an additional \$1 billion to tackle the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, David Nabarro, the UN Special Envoy on Ebola, said in an announcement during the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone are the countries that have suffered the most from the current Ebola outbreak that started in December 2013. According to the latest WHO data, more than 8,600 people have died from the disease in the three West African countries, with over 21,600 cases of the virus registered. **(Source: Business Africa)**