**WHO statement  7 November 2014 -** Leading international organizations and associations from the transport, trade and tourism sector stand firmly with the World Health Organization (WHO) against general bans on travel and trade, as well as restrictions that include general quarantine of travellers from Ebola-affected countries.

The Travel and Transport Task Force*, established in August 2014, calls for international cooperation of governments and the transport sector in following the recommendations of the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee on Ebola, convened by WHO. WHO does not recommend general bans on travel or trade, or general quarantine of travellers arriving from Ebola-affected countries, as measures to contain the outbreak.

Such measures can create a false impression of control and may have a detrimental impact on the number of health care workers volunteering to assist Ebola control or prevention efforts in the affected countries. Such measures may also adversely reduce essential trade including supplies of food, fuel and medical equipment to the affected countries, contributing to their humanitarian and economic hardship.

Current exit screening of all persons departing affected countries through international airports, seaports and major land crossings is recommended by WHO and can reduce the numbers of people with symptoms from travelling from the countries with high levels of Ebola transmission

While screening upon entry into non-affected countries may provide an opportunity to further increase public awareness about Ebola, such screening also can require significant resources including staff, facilities and systems to care for ill travelers who might be suspected of having Ebola.

The best protective measures for non-affected countries are adequate levels of preparedness including heightened surveillance to detect and diagnose cases early and well prepared staff and operational planning to ensure that suspect cases of Ebola are managed safely and in ways to minimize further spread.

Communication campaigns should be conducted to inform travellers, airlines, shipping crews, staff working at points of entry, and health workers everywhere about the symptoms of Ebola virus disease and what to do if a person has symptoms. Data on the efficiency of exit screening should be made available.

People who have travelled to one of three West African countries currently affected by Ebola virus disease (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) should take the following precautions for 21 days after returning:

- stay within reach of a good quality health care facility
- be aware of the symptoms of infection (sudden fever, intense weakness, muscle pain,

headache, vomiting, diarrhoea, rash, and sometimes bleeding)

- immediately report a fever of 38 degrees Celsius or higher to their local medical emergency service (ideally by phone) and mention their travel history

Note that:

- early treatment improves the chance of recovery
- to catch Ebola requires direct contact with the body fluid of an Ebola-infected person.
- asymptomatic individuals are not infectious, even if they are incubating the disease

The IHR Emergency Committee agreed that there should not be a general ban on participation of people from countries with transmission of Ebola from attending international meetings and events. The decision of participation must be made on a case by case basis by the host country. This country may request additional health monitoring of participants.

The Travel and Transport Task Force, which includes WHO, is working together to:

- develop guidance on exit screening recommendations for affected countries
- provide a set of considerations and steps for planning entry screening at point of entry for countries that wish to introduce this as part of their preparedness plan
- inform the aviation and maritime sectors on procedures for caring safely for travellers who are suspected to be infected with Ebola on board an aircraft or ship, or at arrival points

- provide information on Ebola to travellers arriving at or leaving airports, ports or other transit points
- develop protocols for the passenger shipping sector
- collect data and work with authorities to reduce restrictions to port arrivals and ship and aeroplane movements.

The Task Force is concerned about reports of denial of medical care for ill seafarers on board ships that had previously called at ports in the Ebola-affected region.

***About the Travel and Transport Task Force**

Members of the Travel and Transport Task Force include the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the World Tourism Organization

(UNWTO), Airports Council International (ACI), International Air Transport Association (IATA), World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA).
The Task Force was set up in August 2014 to support the global efforts to contain the spread of Ebola virus disease and provide a coordinated international response for the travel, trade and tourism sector.

**About Ebola virus disease**

The risk of transmission of Ebola virus disease during travel is low. Unlike infections such as influenza or tuberculosis, Ebola is not spread by breathing air (and the airborne particles it contains) from an infected person. Transmission requires direct contact with blood, secretions, organs or other body fluids of infected living or dead persons or animals, all unlikely exposures for the average traveller.
People are only infectious after they have started to have symptoms, which include fever, weakness, muscle pain, headache and sore throat. This is followed by vomiting, diarrhoea, rash and, in some cases, bleeding.
If a person, including a traveller, may have been exposed to the Ebola virus, he/she should seek medical attention at the first sign of illness. Early treatment improves chance of survival.

For information on Ebola : http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/en/