

Statement on the Bundibugyo Ebola Outbreak

From the African Academy of Sciences



Addressing the Public Health Emergency

The African Academy of Sciences notes with concern the ongoing Bundibugyo Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda, which has now been declared both a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) by the WHO and a Public Health Emergency of Continental Security (PHECS) by Africa CDC.

This dual declaration confirms what we already know: outbreaks in Africa are not isolated events. They are continental and global threats that demand coordinated, sustained, and proactive action for both rapid outbreak responses and to address the underlying drivers of these outbreaks.

Calls to Action for African Governments

The AAS calls on African governments to:

1. **Increase domestic investment in pandemic and outbreak preparedness:** Reliance on emergency donor funding leaves systems reactive, not resilient. Every African country must budget for functional surveillance, rapid response teams, laboratory networks, and health worker training as core national security priorities.
2. **Prioritize investment in vaccine research, manufacturing, and procurement:** Africa cannot rely on external supply chains during emergencies. We urge accelerated support for regional vaccine manufacturing hubs, technology transfer, and pre-negotiated procurement agreements to ensure timely access for African populations.
3. **Strengthen regional collaboration under the Africa CDC framework:** Cross-border coordination, data sharing, and harmonized response protocols are essential to contain outbreaks before they escalate. The PHECS declaration must be backed by political will and adequate financing. The AAS also calls on nations outside Africa, multilateral institutions, philanthropic organizations, and global health partners to join African nations in curbing this outbreak. This support must be timely, coordinated, and respectful of African leadership. International partners should provide financial resources, technical expertise, laboratory and genomic surveillance support, medical supplies, vaccine access, logistics assistance, and support for frontline health workers. Global solidarity must not arrive only after an outbreak has crossed borders; it must be mobilized early enough to help stop transmission at its source.
4. **Respond to the cuts in financing for African Research and Development:** Africa has the scientific capacity, expertise and experience to lead but deep cuts in global research funding threaten to reverse decades of progress in building strong African research institutions and

scientific leadership. African governments, philanthropists and global partners alike - must urgently invest to sustain Africa's scientific ambition and capability.

5. **Engage communities as partners in response:** Effective outbreak control requires trust. Governments should work with local scientists, the African Academy of Sciences, and community leaders to counter misinformation and ensure interventions are evidence-based and culturally appropriate.
6. **Address the underlying drivers of the growing numbers of outbreaks on the Continent:** The increasing number of outbreaks across the Continent is occurring disproportionately in regions with fragile health systems, often compounded by humanitarian crises, population displacement, conflict and the growing impacts of climate change. Africa's political institutions must address these underlying drivers if outbreaks are to be effectively prevented, detected and controlled.

The Bundibugyo outbreak is a reminder that the next pandemic will not wait for perfect conditions. Africa has the scientific capacity and the experience to lead. What is needed now is the political and financial commitment to match it.

The African Academy of Sciences stands ready to support governments with evidence, expertise, and policy guidance to make pandemic preparedness a reality, not an afterthought.



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For and on behalf of ALL Fellows and Affiliates of the African Academy of Sciences