The Ministry of Health Samoa, with support from the World Health Organization (WHO), issues the following advisory concerning the Ebola virus disease (EVD), in relation to the UN Conference on Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) happening from 1-4 September.

Currently, there have been no confirmed cases exported outside Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. More importantly, the risk of importing a case of EVD into a Pacific Island nation remains low. There are no direct flights from Ebola affected areas to Samoa.

The risk of transmission of EVD during air travel remains low. As such, WHO does not recommend imposing travel bans to or from the affected countries.

**What is EVD?**

EVD is a severe, often fatal illness with an incubation period that varies from 2 to 21 days. A person gets infected by EVD through contact with blood or body fluids of an infected person or animal or by contact with contaminated objects. Symptoms include fever, weakness, muscle pain, headache and sore throat. This is followed by vomiting, diarrhoea, rash, and in some cases, bleeding. There is no risk of transmission during the incubation period and only low risk of transmission in the early stages when patients show symptoms of EVD.

**What is the risk of transmission of Ebola during air travel?**

The risk of transmission of Ebola virus disease during air 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. Travellers are, in any event, advised to avoid all such contacts and routinely practice careful hygiene, like hand washing.

The risk of getting infected on an aircraft is also small as sick persons usually feel so unwell that they cannot travel and infection requires direct contact with the body fluids of the infected person.

The risk of a traveller becoming infected with the Ebola virus during a visit to the affected countries and developing disease after returning is very low, even if the visit includes travel to areas in which cases have been reported.
Public Health Measures and Preparations Undertaken

- Enhanced mass gathering surveillance and public health response
- Strengthened infection prevention and control in all its clinical settings.
- Clinicians being alerted on the signs and symptoms of Ebola infection.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and gear ready for use in hospitals, clinics and ports of entry areas.
- Isolation and quarantine area at vicinity of airport, Faleolo health centre and TTM hospital.
- Enforced public health messages for strict general hygiene, hand hygiene and social distancing from suspected cases.
- National Health Committees and Health Authorities closely monitoring the situation
- Multi-sector government organizations and partners on standby for a possible scenario

Further information on Ebola can be obtained from: