

World Bank to give \$650 million to 3 African countries

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World Bank President Jim Yong Kim, left, accompanied by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Sierra Leone President Ernest Bai Koroma, Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Guinea's President Alpha Condé, speaks during a news conference after an Ebola Recovery Plans meeting on the sidelines of the World Bank/IMF Annual Meetings at IMF headquarters in Washington, Friday, April 17, 2015. (AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana)

The World Bank announced Friday that it will give three West African

countries at least \$650 million over the next 12 to 18 months to help them recover from the devastating effects of Ebola.

The donation, brings the organization's total financing for Ebola response and recovery to \$1.62 billion, is part of a broader effort to help Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone eradicate the disease and recover from its devastation.

Bank President Jim Yong Kim announced the new funding at a meeting with U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Guinean President Alpha Conde, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Sierra Leonean President Ernest Bai Koroma, who presented their Ebola recovery plans to global development leaders.

"Many of us have acknowledged that the international community was slow to react to Ebola," Kim said. "Let's show that we have learned this lesson by supporting effective and sustainable recovery that also prepares these countries—and the rest of the world—for the next pandemic."

Ban said international efforts "must now focus on effective action to eliminate Ebola, the revival and strengthening of health systems and ensuring the resilience of communities in the face of future threats."

The U.N. chief said he would convene a pledging conference in July to help provide the funds these countries need to pay for the recovery. The World Bank estimates GDP losses from Ebola totaling \$240 million for Liberia, \$535 million for Guinea and \$1.4 billion for Sierra Leone.

Johnson Sirleaf, speaking for her fellow presidents, said they hope to obtain up to \$8 billion for a recovery fund for projects the three countries have developed together.

She said the three leaders were encouraged by what they heard at the meeting.

"We go back confident the international community stands with us" in efforts to combat the disease and help restore the economic health of the three countries.

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