

Signing of an MOU with Healey International Relief Foundation

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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To send support and care during the Ebola outbreak, Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation in Taiwan begins relief operations. Even though Taiwan is 13,000 kilometers from Sierra Leone, on March 3, Tzu Chi signs an MOU with Healey International Relief Foundation in Hualien Tzu Chi complex, Taiwan. By signing an MOU, Tzu Chi hopes to begin assisting areas affected by the Ebola outbreak and in desperate need. This international collaboration will deliver multifunction folding beds, Tzu Chi blankets, instant rice meals and other aid supplies to community medical stations and quarantine centers in Sierra Leone to help patients in West Africa.

On March 3, Mr. Stephen Huang, Tzu Chi Global Affairs CEO, officially signs the MOU with Mr. Benjamin Parra, Executive Director of Healey International Relief Foundation. People witnessing the signing ceremony are Mr. Robert Healey Jr., President of Healey International Relief Foundation, Mrs. Philomena Yumkella on behalf of Mr. Kandeh K. Yumkella, Ph.D., United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Chairman of United Nations Energy, Mrs. Debra Boudreaux, Deputy CEO of Tzu Chi USA, and Mr. Stephen T. Fomba, Tzu Chi Special Representative to Sierra Leone for Ebola Relief.

Tzu Chi has provided 1,512 multifunction folding beds, 15 tons of instant rice meals, and 3,000 Tzu Chi blankets, which are scheduled to arrive Sierra Leone in early March. Mr. Fomba will go to Sierra Leone to assist distribution and collaborate with Healey International Relief Foundation and Caritas Freetown Foundation. There is more relief in development.

Mr. Fomba, Tzu Chi Special Representative to Sierra Leone, takes on this project to help his home country. When he learned of Sierra Leone's struggles with the Ebola outbreak, he decided to work with Tzu Chi in Sierra Leone even if he had to leave with his wife and children in the U.S.. With his help, Dr. Kandeh Yumkella recommended Tzu Chi to Healey International Relief Foundation and Caritas Freetown Foundation; both are internationally well-known humanitarian agencies working for Ebola prevention in Sierra Leone. Working with them, Tzu Chi's Sierra Leone Ebola relief is officially scheduled to launch in March.

According to World Health Organization reports, Ebola still remains very widespread in West African countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Though several international relief agencies are active in providing aid, local medical services still remain inadequate to fill public need. This is the first operation from Taiwan to contribute aid for Ebola outbreak. All the relief supplies are going directly to the Ebola patients and their families.

Of the aid items provided, the Tzu Chi multifunction folding bed has received the Red Dot Award, an internationally recognized quality seal for product design. This bed is easy to carry and packs conveniently for transportation. It can serve as a portable bed for patients and their

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families in medical facilities and quarantine centers. Instant rice meals are fast and convenient to prepare and provide a nutritious food supplement. Tzu Chi blankets are light and comfortable, an excellent source of warmth for patients.

Though no Ebola outbreak has been detected in Asia, the World Health Organization has stated the outbreak in West Africa constitutes a public health risk. Tzu Chi is Taiwan's first non-profit organization to respond by delivering aid to Sierra Leone. Plans to work with several other relief agencies and international organizations are in place for Ebola prevention and relief.