



New partnership aims to combat the spread of infectious disease in West Africa

Sterling Heights, MI – Wednesday June 3, 2015

The Republic of Ghana and the Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers Association (MAMA) are partnering to develop essential medical infrastructure that will rapidly identify, contain and eliminate future outbreaks of deadly and contagious diseases in Ghana. The partnership was confirmed in a letter from the Chief of Staff to the President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama, on May 13.

Gavin Brown, Executive Director of MAMA, said the collaboration is a vital step towards ensuring Ghana's preparedness for medical emergencies.

"As we saw recently following the outbreak of Ebola, the countries of West Africa are susceptible to severe medical emergencies and need MAMA's HELP to contain them. We are committed to working with officials in Ghana in their efforts to ensure their country is in a position to fight and eliminate infectious disease outbreaks in the future," Mr. Brown said.

MAMA has developed a Humanitarian Emergency Logistics Program (HELP) that is a self-supporting, scalable, and robust communication and distribution network that can be rapidly deployed to optimize the logistical response to humanitarian emergencies. The partnership with Ghana is the initial proof of concept deployment of the MAMA-HELP program.

In addition, the MAMA-HELP program will include several Ghana-specific elements: creation of ten regional medical centers; provision of two ambulances for each of the regional medical centers; provision of two helicopters, as well as Unmanned Cargo Aircrafts (UCAs) and Humanitarian Assistance Vehicles (HAVs), for the distribution of medical supplies and vaccines; and the re-building and stocking of a recently destroyed medical supply center in Tema. Additionally, MAMA-HELP will work with local medical staff to train them in safe emergency medical techniques.

In the case of a medical emergency, such as the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa, MAMA-HELP will utilize UCAs and HAVs to transport critical medical supplies to outlying regional medical centers and transport medical specimens to mission headquarters for analysis. MAMA-HELP will work in partnership with Lockheed Martin to deploy the unmanned K-MAX helicopter, which can safely deliver sling loads of essential medical supplies to multiple drop zones, and return to headquarters with minimal ground operator oversight. By removing unnecessary human interactions, these vehicles will be a key enabler to stop the spread of contagious diseases both within Ghana and to other countries.

In collaboration with the Republic of Ghana, MAMA-HELP will be capable of undertaking deployments in-country within two to three years.

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Notes to editors:

The Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers Association's Humanitarian Emergency Logistics Program (MAMA-HELP) is designed to provide a rapid response to the outbreaks of deadly contagious diseases, cyclones, tsunamis, and earthquakes. By providing a coherent logistics system during humanitarian emergencies, MAMA-HELP aims to get what is needed, where it is needed, when it is needed. MAMA-HELP is being supported both financially and technically by a collaboration of businesses, NGOs, philanthropic and governmental organizations. For more information, visit <http://michman.org/Humanitarian-Emergency-Logistics-Program>.

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