

## Tzu Chi and Partners Deliver Rice, Beds and Blankets in Sierra Leone

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The Tzu Chi Foundation and two other charities delivered 15 tons of instant rice, 400 folding beds and 550 blankets to people in the west African state of Sierra Leone affected by the Ebola epidemic. During three days in March, the three charities carried out nine distributions.

March 18 this year marked the first anniversary of the epidemic in Sierra Leone. As of the end of March this year, it had recorded nearly 12,000 cases, of whom 3,799 people died, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). It is the country worst affected by the disease.

In order to help, the Tzu Chi Foundation signed on March 3 this year a memorandum of understanding with the Healy International Relief Foundation to provide multi-function folding beds, instant rice meals and Tzu Chi environmental blankets to those in need in Sierra Leone.

The three charities worked together to carry out the distributions. The beds are specially designed for easy to carry and pack conveniently for transportation. Many patients who have contracted Ebola must go to hospital, but the numbers of beds is insufficient. The beds can be quickly laid out in a small place and save the user from sleeping on the floor. The blankets are light and comfortable.



On March 18th to 20th, the NGOs organized their first distribution in Sierra Leone where they visited nine social welfare organizations and hospitals to distribute 1,525 cartons of Tzu Chi's instant rice, 400 portable folding beds and 550 blankets.

During the three days of distributions, the volunteers went to many hospitals where they gave out the folding beds and the blankets. They hope that they will help to address the shortage of beds. The co-operation between the three charities went smoothly; it was the first of its kind between them. Although this program has ended, they will continue to monitor the Ebola epidemic in Sierra Leone and provide the help needed at the appropriate time.