

# Ebola triggers force majeure at ArcelorMittal mine in Liberia

## BRUSSELS

STEEL and mining company ArcelorMittal on Friday announced force majeure on a project that is planned to triple its iron ore production in Liberia because of the Ebola epidemic sweeping West Africa.

The World Health Organization on Friday said the epidemic constituted an international health emergency.

ArcelorMittal, which mines and ships 5 million tonnes of iron ore a year in Liberia, has been working on an expansion project that

would increase shipments to 15 million tonnes of iron ore.

First production from the new project is planned by the end of next year.

However, contractors working on the project have declared force majeure and were moving people out of the country, ArcelorMittal said.

Declarations of force majeure are used to prevent companies from being sued when extraordinary circumstances beyond their control prevent the fulfilment of contractual obligations.

The company is assessing the impact on the project

schedule and hoped to restart work as soon as possible. It added the force majeure only affects the new project and other operations in Yekepa and Buchanan are continuing as normal.

"While the recent developments are very concerning, at present we believe that the emergency procedures and other measures developed and currently in place at all ArcelorMittal sites in Liberia make it possible to continue our phase 1 operations," Bill Scotting, chief executive of ArcelorMittal Mining, said.