

AFRICAN UNION

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FIVE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 6TH AFRICAN FIELD EPIDEMIOLOGY NETWORK (AFENET) SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE.



Team of epidemiologists from the Africa CDC on alert and ready to safe guard the continent

NIGERIA, ABUJA 8th – 12th August, 2016 - Africa Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) team took part in the **6th AFENET Scientific** Conference under the theme, *'Enhancing Global Health Security through Field Epidemiology Training Programs*. The conference which is the largest meeting to discuss public health issues in Africa, was held in Abuja, Nigeria ~~from the 6th – 13th August 2016.~~ This meeting presents an opportunity for the Africa CDC epidemiologists to contribute to the public health community and to network with other stakeholders as they develop a common agenda to address critical public health challenges in Africa.

Key outcomes from the conference are highlighted below.

1. The Africa CDC epidemiologists conducted its **first survey on Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP)** on Event Based Surveillance (EBS) and Public Health Emergency Management (PHEM) in the margins of the 6th AFENET conference in Abuja, Nigeria. The survey aimed at assessing the current situation

on the implementation of Event Based Surveillance (EBS) in Africa. Epidemiologists at the conference from the field of laboratory, veterinary, human health and environmental health comprised the sample interviewees.

This activity falls under the Africa CDC strategic aims for the next two years to establish EBS, support public health emergency preparedness and response and assist Member States to address gaps in International Health Regulations (2005) compliance. It therefore targets the scientific forum in establishing ground information with regard to EBS and PHEM in Africa.



Africa CDC team preparing survey on Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) on Event Based Surveillance (EBS) and Public Health Emergency Management (PHEM)

2. The Africa CDC successfully exhibited its advocacy materials at the AFENET scientific conference. The aim of the exhibition was to promote the progress in the operationalizing of the Africa CDC; publicize and advocate for EBS and PHEM to public health networks, especially Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETP) in Africa. The exhibition displayed Africa CDC's timeline, showing its progress since inception. Fact sheets, frequently asked questions and key messages of the Africa CDC were also shared to ensure key stakeholders are well informed on the newly established Africa CDC and identify key areas of collaboration and funding.

Key public health stakeholders who visited the exhibition included Health Ministers from Nigeria and Zimbabwe, Dr Dionisio Herrera, Director of the Training Programs in Epidemiology and Public Health Interventions Network (TEPHINET) Global; Prof. Mufuta Tshimanga, Chairperson of the AFENET Board of Directors; Dr Kenneth Ofose-Barko, AFENET Executive Director; Prof. Abdulsalami Nasidi, Acting Executive Director of the Economic Community of West African States. (ECOWAS) and Stewart Anthony Paul from WHO; among others.

3. The Africa CDC had a great opportunity to **host a side meeting with Field Epidemiology Training Programs (FETP) Directors and resident advisors** in the region, to call for the support and strengthening of collaboration between the Africa CDC and FETP's in the continent. This will provide the Africa CDC with an

opportunity to train FETP residence on EBS and PHEM, thus achieving the Africa CDC strategic aims of supporting Members States in establishing EBS and in public health emergency preparedness and response.

4. The scientific conference also provided a platform for the Africa CDC **to network with key public health professionals** which was critical to our mission of extracting as much recommendations as possible from these subject matter experts (SMEs) on implementation of EBS at the community, subnational, national and continental level.
5. ‘A man too busy to take care of his health is like a mechanic too busy to take care of his tools.’ Africa CDC team participated in a “Paint Ball Tournament” and won the gold medal. Each team needed to protect its flag and eliminate the other team to win the **sports competition**. This is similar to our target in Africa CDC where this flag represents our population that we need to protect them from the other team which in this case are viruses and bacteria. A win for the Africa CDC team is symbolic of its willingness to win its fight against microorganisms and protect our beloved continent. **FA**

Note to Editor

Assembly/AU/December 5 54 (XXIV) adopted at the 24th ordinary session of the assembly held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January 2015 in which the assembly endorsed the establishment of the Africa CDC and approved that the coordination office should initially be located at the headquarters of the Africa union in Addis Ababa.

Vision of the Africa CDC - A safer, healthier, integrated and prosperous Africa, in which member states can prevent disease, detect and respond together to crises of public health importance

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