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Directorate of Information and Communication

Press Release

African Union begins drafting appropriate plans and procedures in readiness for operations of Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

21 December 2016- As Africa prepares to launch the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (AfricaCDC) in January 2017, directors and other senior staff members of the African Union (AU) are meeting in Zanzibar from 21 to 23 December to draft appropriate plans and procedures to facilitate the rapid response required by the AfricaCDC.



The Africa CDC was established by the AU Heads of States and Governments at the AU Summit in January 2015, with the mandate to support African countries in their efforts to effectively respond to public health emergencies through capacity building and technical assistance to

address complex health challenges the countries may experience. The fact that in 2016 alone, the African Continent has experienced a number of disease outbreaks including yellow fever, cholera, dengue and other infections, underscores the importance of the center.

Formation of the AfricaCDC supports the achievement of Africa's Agenda 2063 aspiration 1, goal 3, i.e. healthy and well-nourished citizens. The center satisfies at least two indicative strategies of the agenda, as its work will strengthen health systems as well as develop/implement programmes to combat communicable and non-communicable diseases.

Because disease epidemics, such as the Ebola outbreak that affected Africa in 2013-2015 are emergency situations needing immediate response, the meeting is reviewing critical

components of the African Union's policies and guidelines so that they may best serve the continent in the event that a public health emergency is declared.

Departments attending the meeting include Social Affairs which is the host, and the Directorates of Information and Communication, Administration and Human Resources Management, Strategic Planning, Political Affairs, Finance, Internal Audit and Medical Services. Support is being reserved from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The African Union Commissioner of Social Affairs Dr Mustapha Kaloko described the AfricaCDC as "a very important institution" in the AU's efforts to safeguard Africa's health. Speaking at the opening session of the Zanzibar meeting on 21 December, he reminded participants of the necessity to take the interests of member states of the AU in their planning.

Talking about the next steps in the production of the operational manual, the AUC Director of Social Affairs Dr Olawale Maiyegun said, "our expectation is that the outcome of the meeting will be presented to the two governing structures of the AfricaCDC i.e. the advisory and technical council and the governing board that will be meeting in March 2017". "Our aim in this three day meeting is to put in place the necessary policies and regulations to enable the AfricaCDC to have a successful start".

In the lead up to its official launch, the AfricaCDC has already started some operations at its headquarters in Addis Ababa, including the emergency operating center (EOC) that serves as an early warning system for the continent. The EOC will work with and through regional centers that have been established in each of the continent's five regions. A director for the center has also been appointed.

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