



Directorate of Information and Communication

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Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention's Regional Collaborating Centres in Africa agree on a strategic plan and roadmap for disease prevention and response in Africa

Commit to work with each other to respond to disease epidemics that know no borders

Addis Ababa, 17 March 2017- The meeting of the Regional Collaborating Centres of the recently-established Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention Friday set priority actions for prevention, disease control and response to public health threats and emergencies on the continent. The Africa CDC's Regional Collaborating Centres are the critical pillars for the implementation of the Africa CDC's strategy to improve the public health outcomes of all African countries through surveillance, emergency response, and prevention of infectious diseases.

"The major challenge in Africa has been how to work together in unison when dealing with epidemics. We have agreed to work together as regions and countries to share disease intelligence and share our capacity to respond" said Dr. Chikwe Ihekweazu, the Director of the ECOWAS Regional Centre for Surveillance and Disease Control, based in Abuja, Nigeria. "The Ebola epidemic and the response that we mounted together as communities, African institutions and development partners was a game changer on the continent" he added.

The Africa CDC's strategic priorities for the next five years are to strengthen health-related surveillance systems and establish diseases intelligence hubs for improved public health decision making and action. The Africa CDC will further strengthen information systems to collect and analyse public health information in Africa in a timely manner. Africa CDC will also work to improve workforce competency and quality assurance by working with networks of clinical and public health laboratories. The Africa CDC will also support member states to develop effective public health emergency preparedness and response plans and strengthen public health science and improve public health decision-making and practice to achieve positive health outcomes.

The Africa CDC Regional Collaborating Centres will build its engagement through functional national public health institutes within the countries of a given region. Collaboration between and among these national public health institutes will rely upon existing legal and economic relationships in each of Africa's regional economic bodies. Priority activities for the regional units will be to establish a means for regional exchange of surveillance data, train a body of rapid public health responders who are available for deployment across the region, and integrate public health laboratories to facilitate specimen referral and expand diagnostic capacities.

"Africa is providing leadership and strengthening its health architecture to enhance global health security and address disease outbreaks, man-made and natural disasters, and public health events of regional and international concern" said Dr. John Nkengasong, the Director of the Africa Centres of Disease Control and Prevention 'Disease

intelligence, which is our ability to collect precise and accurate data in a timely manner and act expeditiously, is the cornerstone of our approach', added Nkengasong.

The Statute of the Africa CDC endorsed by the Africa Heads of State and Government in 2016 tasks the institution to establish early warning and response surveillance platforms to address in a timely and effective manner all health emergencies. The Africa CDC will work closely with the World Health Organisation to strengthen public health emergency preparedness and response and will convene several ministerial departments together to simulation exercises. Critical to the achievement of this objective is the need to ensure International Health Regulations compliance, health systems strengthening, addressing communicable and non-communicable diseases, environmental health and neglected tropical diseases.

The Africa CDC is taking a leadership position in promoting partnerships and collaboration among African and non-African countries to address emerging and endemic diseases and public health emergencies.

About the Africa CDC

The Africa CDC supports all African Countries to improve surveillance, emergency response, and prevention of infectious diseases. This includes addressing outbreaks, man-made and natural disasters, and public health events of regional and international concern. It further seeks to build the capacity to reduce disease burden on the continent.

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