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Concept note

Meeting for the development of a procurement and operational guideline manual for the Africa CDC

Zanzibar Islands, 21st – 23rd December 2016

1. Background

Taking into account the health challenges faced by the African continent and the necessity for an accountability framework for health security to protect citizens of Africa and beyond, the AU Heads of States and Governments established the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) through the **Assembly Decision /AU/Dec.554 (XXIV)**, at the AU Summit in January 2015 at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Africa CDC aims 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.

Response to public health emergency and any disease of unknown origin must be swift and decisive, often within or less than 24 hours. It follows that they must have ready equipment, reagents, and vaccines among others required for response in emergency situations. Lessons learnt during the EVD outbreak including delayed response & deployment, lack of stock piles for diseases emergencies within the Member States and Continent, lack of availability of emergency rosters and volunteers have formed the core capacities of the Africa CDC. So far in 2016 alone, the African Continent has experience more than 15 disease outbreak including yellow fever, Cholera, dengue and other infections. These continuous outbreaks call for emergency response to detect and disrupt the chain of transmission and prevent spread to neighbouring countries. The Africa CDC and its Regional Collaborating Centres (RCCs) work together with Members States to strengthen epidemic preparedness, surveillance and response systems and also establish an early warning mechanism for rapid response in outbreaks events and humanitarian emergencies in Africa.

Considering that this characteristic and area of operation is specific and unique to the Africa CDC, how can we make the current administrative, financial and procurement rules of the AUC to facilitate the rapid response required by the Africa CDC? What are the changes required? Is it possible to develop an administrative and procurement guidelines/manual suitable for the smooth functioning of the Africa CDC without violating or derogating the extant Financial Rules and Regulations and the recently revised Procurement Manual of the AU? It

is imperative that the Commission facilitates the operation of Africa CDC in order to deliver on its mandate in emergency response and preparedness, as the activities of the Africa CDC is set to expand exponentially in 2017.

Notwithstanding that it has commenced operations in 2016, the Africa CDC will be formally launched (ribbon cutting ceremony) in January 2017 by the Chair of the Assembly and the Chairperson of the Commission during the January Assembly. Moreover, the first Director of the Africa CDC will resume at the beginning of January 2017

It is in the light of the foregoing that the Department of Social Affairs is organizing a retreat of Directors of Departments relevant to the functioning of the Africa CDC to critically examine the questions raised above and to explore the possibility of developing an administrative and procurement guidelines/manual specific to the Africa CDC. This will support the Africa CDC in terms of emergency deployment, procurement of equipment, vaccines and reagents within quickest possible timeframe, surveillance and capacity building to Member States during epidemics, pandemics and diseases emergencies thus fulfilling its mandate.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE RETREAT

The objective of the meeting is to raise awareness and deeper understanding emergency preparedness and response, and subsequently develop a manual which will assist the operations of the Africa CDC to responds to epidemics, emergencies and diseases outbreaks that may occur within the continent.

3. PARTICIPANTS

The participants include AU Staff from the Department of Social Affairs, Africa CDC, BCP, PBFA, Internal Audit, Political Affairs, MIS, PSOD, AHRM, OLC, Communications, Medical Services and US CDC.

4. DATE, VENUE AND LOGISTIC INFORMATION OF THE RETREAT

The proposed venue for the retreat is Zanzibar Serena Hotel, Zanzibar City from 21 to 23 December 2016. The Department of Social Affairs will coordinate the logistics and make necessary arrangements for accommodation and conference facilities. The retreat will be conducted in English. The hotel will provide breakfast for all participants. Healthy breaks and lunch will be provided by the meeting conveners. Serena Hotel is located about twenty minutes' drive from the airport and transportation will be arranged by the department.

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