

Press Release N°005/2015**AFRICAN UNION AND KENYA SENDING 170 HEALTH WORKERS TO EBOLA AFFECTED COUNTRIES****Nairobi, Kenya 8 January**

2015- The general consensus among African leaders who addressed the official opening of the pre deployment training of 170 Kenyan health workers today, is that through solidarity, the continent will defeat the Ebola virus disease, that has so far claimed thousands of lives, mainly in Liberia, Sierra

Leone and Guinea. The Kenyan contingent will be departing for the affected countries tomorrow, 9th January 2015.

The pre deployment and training workshop, held in the Kenyan capital cautiously welcomed the signs of decline in the rate of new infections in Liberia and expressed concern over the situation in Sierra Leone, which is now the most heavily affected. Calls were made for concerted efforts to rebuild health systems in Africa so that countries can cope with similar outbreaks in future. There was also a call to avoid complacency in the recovery period, which could see the infection rates going up again.

Speakers at the ceremony included Amb. Amina Mohamed, Kenyan Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade; Mr. James Macharia, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Health; Amb Olawale Maiyegun, Director Social Affairs, African Union Commission; Dr De Kock of the American Center for Diseases Control and Prevention, and Dr. Khadijah Kassachoon, Principal Secretary in the Kenyan Ministry of Health.

The current Ebola virus disease outbreak, which first manifest in December 2013, is still killing people particularly in the three worst affected countries. The danger posed by the disease prompted the African Union to intervene by sending skilled human resources to treat victims as well as to carry out other associated tasks such as contact tracing, burials, decontamination, surveillance, social mobilization, community health education and psycho social support. 86 Africans joined the effort as individual volunteers between September and October 2014. They were followed by 197 Nigerians, 187 Ethiopians and 82 Congolese (DRC) in December. The 170 Kenyans now under training will greatly add momentum to an African Union and international effort that is



starting to show positive result. Another 115 health experts from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have joined the African Union Support to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA).

“We took the fight against Ebola to the frontline because we needed to fight it where it is. New infections are flattening out and we should soon start seeing a significant decline. We very much appreciate the solidarity shown by Africa

in this fight” said Dr Maiyegun of the African Union’s Department of Social Affairs, who spoke on behalf of the Commission’s Chairperson Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma and its Deputy Chairperson Mr. Erastus Mwencha.



“The crisis happened in countries that were coming out of conflict and their health systems could not cope. Kenya pledged \$1million to the fight against Ebola. Today we are sending 170 Kenyans to the Ebola frontline. As Africa, we are always stronger when we work together”, said Ambassador Amina Mohammed.

Dr James Macharia called the health workers heroes and offered further information on the severity of the current

outbreak. “This outbreak has surpassed all other previous outbreaks put together 8 times over. The African Union has shown serious commitment and we appreciate this”, he told the health workers.

Tomorrow, 9th January, the Kenyan health workers will depart Nairobi for the affected countries after a short farewell session with national president Mr Uhuru Kenyatta. The African Union Commission’s Deputy Chairperson Mr. Erastus Mwencha will be present to witness the event as well as to sign the memorandum of understanding between the Kenyan government and the African Union.

You can support the African Union Support mission to Ebola to Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA) on www.AfricaAgainstEbola.org or donate through sms on the short codes available in participating countries. Tweet and retweet: #AUonEbola. More information on ASEOWA is available on <http://aseowa.au.int>.

For more information on the AU response to the Ebola crisis and interview requests contact:
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