



NEPAD PLANNING AND COORDINATING AGENCY

Press Release

NEPAD joins AU in the fight against Ebola – Clinical vaccine trials underway

Addis Ababa, January 26, 2015 – The interventions taken by the NEPAD Agency in the fight against Ebola were a top priority at the NEPAD Steering Committee meeting yesterday, on the side-lines of the 24th African Union (AU) Summit in Addis Ababa. They are part of the AU's Response to the Ebola Epidemic in West Africa (ASEOWA).

Professor Aggrey Ambali, Head and Advisor of NEPAD Science, Technology and Innovation Hub (NSTIH) said that emphasis is placed on mobilising African countries to put in place conducive and enabling environments for conducting clinical trials to test the candidate vaccines and other therapies against Ebola.

In his presentation to the Steering Committee members, Professor Ambali urged that most of the National Medicines Regulatory Agencies (NMRAs) and ethics committees are currently experiencing difficulties in providing ethics clearance and regulatory oversight on clinical trials conducted in the member states.

For instance, there are several ethical and policy issues that need to be resolved in order to collect and transport whole blood and plasma from Ebola patients in the concerned countries.

The NEPAD Agency through its African Medicines Regulatory Harmonisation (AMRH) programme is working with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and National Medicines Regulatory Agencies (NMRAs) to mobilise the required capacity for clinical trials oversight and ethical clearances.

Through the support of the NEPAD Agency and the World Health Organization (WHO), the East African Community (EAC) is conducting a joint evaluation of a candidate Ebola vaccine which will be held on February 2 to 4. Targeted countries for the clinical trials are Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, while the joint evaluation will be carried out by all the five member states of the EAC.

The NEPAD Agency is also working with the West Africa Health Organization (WAHO) of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to establish a regional experts working group on trials for Ebola Vaccine and other promising treatment options in order to accelerate their evaluation. The Working Group will be established early next month.

It is expected that the joint reviews in the two regions will not only fast-track the approval process for the vaccine trials but also serve as a mechanism for strengthening regulatory systems and ethical standards in Africa.

The clinical trials for two candidate Ebola vaccines are currently underway in West Africa and there are several more in the pipeline.

About the AMRH Programme

NEPAD's AMRH programme sets and improves standards and requirements for regulation and access to quality and safe drugs for African citizens. Key interventions include the harmonisation of medicines regulations among RECs as well as policy and regulatory reforms.

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