



PRESS RELEASE

Southern Africa establishes the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention Regional Collaborating Centre to improve surveillance, emergency response and prevention of infectious and non-communicable diseases

Lusaka, 21 July 2017- Southern African countries met on Thursday and Friday to operationalize the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention's (Africa CDC) Regional Collaborating Centres (RCC) in Lusaka, Zambia to improve surveillance, emergency response and prevention of infectious and non-communicable diseases. The Africa CDC is working to harness the public health assets that already exist in the region including universities, national public health institutes, private laboratories, centres of excellence, non-governmental organisations and veterinary networks.

The Africa CDC Regional Collaborating Centres will work closely with the Africa CDC secretariat in Addis Ababa to support surveillance, laboratory systems and networks, information systems, emergency preparedness and response, capacity development and public health research in Member States.

"African Heads of State and Government at the recent Africa Union Summit issued a Declaration to accelerate the implementation of International Health Regulations. The Declaration together with the Africa Health Strategy (2016-2030) and Agenda 2063 - the Africa we want, offers a unique opportunity for a new public health order in Africa to safeguard the health security of the continent. This is the dawn of a new era for a multi-sectorial approach, private sector partnerships, enhanced coordination of partners' efforts through country leadership, innovation, and continuous political commitment. Disease threats anywhere in Africa are disease threats everywhere on the continent, so we need to work in a network to address public health threats on the continent," said Dr. John Nkengasong, the Director of the Africa Centres of Disease Control and Prevention.

The RCC will coordinate their efforts through the Regional Integrated Surveillance and Laboratory Network (RISLNET) launched in Addis Ababa in March this year. The RCC will coordinate surveillance for public health events in the region, assess the risk of public health events, verify or investigate rumours or signals detected by Africa CDC's Surveillance Unit in Addis Ababa. The Africa CDC RISLNET activities offer an opportunity for collaboration among Member States including reference testing, surveillance, emergency response, data sharing and management, training, outreach and communication. The collaboration and support of the RCCs is key in delivering an Africa CDC without walls that supports the continent at the point of need.

"There are considerable emergency and response capacities and assets in countries in the Southern Africa Development Community. The Africa CDC's RCC in Zambia will apply these capabilities and ensure that disease intelligence is shared regularly across borders and ensure that we achieve the health related aspirations of Agenda 2063 and put Africa on a firm path of inclusive growth and development and harness Africa's

demographic dividend” said Hon. Dr. Chitalu Chilufya, the Minister of Health of the Republic of Zambia.

The Republic of Zambia have taken key steps to fully operationalise the Centre including providing infrastructure and human resources.

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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