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Directorate of Information and Communication

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AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION, AFRICA CENTRES FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, AND THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION JOINT MEETING ON EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE PREPAREDNESS, VACCINES AND THERAPEUTICS

Health is at the Heart of Africa’s Developmental Agenda

ADDIS ABABA, 21st FEBRUARY 2019: The Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Kwesi Quartey, has said that health remains at the heart of Africa’s continental developmental agenda. In his opening address to a joint technical meeting on Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) held at the African Union Commission (AUC) headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 21 and 22 February 2019, he assured participants of AUC’s commitment to creating synergies for controlling and preventing the spread of EVD across the continent.

“Diseases know no borders; hence we need an integrated and comprehensive approach to the health challenges facing Africa if we’re to achieve our health goals in the Agenda 2063,” said H.E. Quartey.

The conference, organized jointly by the African Union, Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), was well attended by representatives of African Union Member States, other governments outside Africa, the World Bank, United Nations agencies, donor and development organizations, pharmaceutical and drug development organizations, and the media. It is the first of its kind facilitated by Africa CDC.

“Ebola Virus Disease has become more widely spread geographically, causing major health and political crisis. This is the first scientific meeting organized by Africa CDC on Ebola virus,” said Dr Yankuba Kassama, Director of Medical Services, African Union Commission.

The meeting provided an opportunity to update Member States on progress in diagnostics, vaccines and therapeutics preparedness for EVD in Africa and to share experience and lessons from Ebola interventions across the continent.

“This meeting is an excellent platform for Member States to receive update and share experience on efforts towards preparedness to prevent and contain EVD outbreaks in

Africa,” said H.E. Dr Amir Aman, Minister of Health Ethiopia and Chair of the Governing Board of Africa CDC.

There were presentations of experiences and lessons from Ebola control efforts in West Africa and other countries, including Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, and Democratic Republic of Congo. There were also presentations on the development, availability, use, regulation and perspectives on the EVD vaccines and therapeutics. Extensive discussions were held on current trends in the production, distribution and stockpiling of EVD vaccines and drugs for effective preparedness and response.

Participants identified the need for dialogues and sensitization to increase understanding of the need for stockpiling by countries that have not experienced any Ebola outbreak. They highlighted the need for more research and capacity strengthening for Ebola response and increase in access to the vaccines.

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