



Press Release

**Training of Trainers Workshop on Public Health Emergency Operations Centres Opens in Addis Ababa**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 24 June 2019:** A nine-day training of trainers workshop on the management and operations of a Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) opened in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Monday 24 June 2019. Thirty-one trainees from 21 African Union Member States and Saudi Arabia are participating in the workshop, which is facilitated jointly by the West Africa Health Organization (WAHO), WHO Headquarters, WHO Regional Office for Africa, WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, US CDC and Africa CDC.

Public health emergencies are rampant in Africa and continue to be a major threat to national, regional and global health security. A PHEOC serves as a hub for coordinating preparedness and response to public health emergencies. However, the concept of PHEOC is relatively new, and only 14 AU Member States currently have one. The workshop, therefore, aims to create a team of PHEOC experts for Africa who will be empowered to strengthen the capacity of Member States to coordinate, prepare for and respond to public health emergencies appropriately through efficiently operated PHEOCs.

“The concept of emergency operation centre is relatively new and because we’re at an infancy stage we need to develop capacity, which is central to efficient functioning of the EOC,” said Dr John Nkengasong, Director Africa CDC.

Using the standardized modules for PHEOC, participants will learn the fundamentals of the functioning and operations of an efficient EOC, including the legal and administrative procedures for their establishment, and how to transfer the skills they acquire to others. They will participate in practical sessions on how to conduct and manage public health emergency simulation exercises.

“The main functions that are happening at the PHEOC are preparedness, readiness and response to public health related events including leadership, operations, logistics, planning and administration, and these are the things that we will be dealing with in this training,” said Dr Agerry Bategereza, Interim Representative at WHO Ethiopia country office.

Participants are expected to apply the skills and knowledge they acquire through the training to the operations of their national PHEOCs and to cascade these to others in their respective countries and other African countries.

In his message to the participants, Mr Wilton Metchion of the US CDC, said: “You are a part of a transformational history that is occurring right now on this continent and

across the globe. You should look at this from a larger global view as we draw down to the technical issues and be prepared to empower others with the same message.”

“We expect to have a multiplier effect of the tools, skills and knowledge acquired in this training in our countries,” said Dr Virgile Lokossou, representative of WAHO in the training.

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