Joint Press Release

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Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Team Europe: Germany and European Union jointly support African Union’s response to COVID-19

The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) today received additional 500,000 COVID-19 test kits from the German Government through the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). As part of the EU’s global coronavirus response, the test kits were delivered by an EU Humanitarian Air Bridge flight in August.

The shipment is part of a 10 million Euro immediate in-kind support to African Union in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In total, almost 1.4 million kits for the extraction and detection of SARS-CoV-2 virus will be made available to African Union Member States through this initiative.

Mr Gerd Müller, Minister of Development Cooperation of the Federal Republic of Germany, said on the occasion: “We will either beat the coronavirus together worldwide – or not at all. This is why we are supporting the African Union through the German Epidemic Preparedness Team in a cooperation with the EU. Africa CDC coordinates the procurement of life-saving testing equipment for African Union Member States. They also play an important role in training African healthcare workers. With our support to the ‘Partnership to Accelerate COVID-19 Testing (PACT)’, we make sure that testing is made widely available. We stand by our friends in Africa in the fight against coronavirus.”

In a Team Europe effort, the EU and Germany are joining hands to help the African Union PACT initiative in delivering its COVID-19 tracing and testing objectives.

“Through the EU Humanitarian Air Bridge, the European Commission continues to work hand in hand with Member States to support vulnerable countries amidst the coronavirus pandemic. It is in our common interest to tackle the pandemic worldwide. We are committed to ensuring effective delivery of essential medical equipment to the countries that need it the most. This specific consignment will be able to reach a large number of countries as it will support the African Union continental response,” said Janez Lenarčič, EU Commissioner for Crisis Management.

The kits delivery is part of the larger Team Europe support to Africa’s continental response to COVID-19. In June, Team Europe provided EUR 10 million to support implementation of the Africa Joint Continental Strategy for Coronavirus Outbreak. The fund will particularly facilitate the deployment of healthcare workers and rapid responders for surveillance, laboratory testing and case management at country
level as well as the strengthening of the Africa Continental Taskforce for Coronavirus.

“Partnership is key to winning the battle against COVID-19 locally and globally because no country can manage the pandemic alone. That is why as a continental body, Africa CDC is working with several partners and exploring all markets to unlock the supply chain system for diagnostics and medical supplies for African Union Member States, and we are delighted to see the Government of Germany and the European Union coming out strongly to support our initiatives,” said Dr John Nkengasong, Director of Africa CDC.

Background

The test kits have been sourced by the German Epidemic Preparedness Team (SEEG). The SEEG was initiated in 2015 by BMZ in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Health in response to the West African Ebola crisis. The SEEG brings together the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, the Charité, the Robert Koch Institute and the Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine. In addition to providing testing materials, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and the SEEG will team up for External Quality Assessments in the designated African reference laboratories, using the provided test kits for benchmarking and accreditation of quality and effectiveness of testing in Africa.

The total Team Europe global response package stands at EUR 36.5 billion, combining resources from the EU, its Member States, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. This support focuses on addressing the immediate health crisis and the resulting humanitarian needs; on strengthening partner countries’ health, nutrition, water and sanitation systems and their research, preparedness and response capacities; as well as on supporting them in alleviating the social and economic consequences of the crisis. At least EUR 6.8 billion is supporting countries in Africa. Additionally, a considerable part of the overall Team Europe guarantees of EUR 2.9 billion will also benefit Africa.

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