

AFRICA CENTRES FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (AFRICA CDC)

REPORT OF ASSESSMENT AND PARTNERSHIP VISIT TO RABAT AND CASABLANCA, MOROCCO

10-14 June 2019

PURPOSE OF VISIT.....

To assess public health workforce development gaps and explore partnership opportunities for the development of a network on antimicrobial resistance.

AFRICA CDC TEAM.....

1. H.E. Richard Kamwi
2. Dr John Nkengasong, Director, Africa CDC
3. Dr Benjamin Djoudalbaye, Head, Division of Health Policy, Diplomacy and Communication, Africa CDC
4. Dr Raji Tajudeen, Head, Division of Public Health Institutes and Research, Africa CDC

PLACES VISITED.....

1. Ministry of Health, Rabat
2. National School of Public Health, Rabat
3. Institute Pasteur, Casablanca

MOROCCO TEAM.....

1. H.E. Anass Doukkali
2. Prof. Hicham Nejmi
3. Prof. Maaroufi Abderrahmane
4. Prof. Abdelmounim Belalia





Africa CDC delegation is welcomed in Casablanca by Professor Maaroufi Abderrahmane, Director of the Institute Pasteur, Morocco.

BACKGROUND

The mission of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) is to strengthen the capacities and capabilities of public health institutions and partnerships to detect and respond quickly and effectively to disease threats and outbreaks based on science, policy and data-driven interventions and programmes.

To build strong public health institutions in Africa needed to implement the *Africa Health Strategy 2016–2030*, achieve *Agenda 2063* and realize the vision of Africa CDC, Member States need to have a very strong health workforce.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is on the increase globally and it threatens to render existing treatments for many infectious diseases ineffective. AMR has already been documented as a problem in the treatment of HIV, malaria, tuberculosis, typhoid, cholera, meningitis, gonorrhoea and dysentery in Africa. Africa CDC, with the support of Member States and partners, has developed a strategic framework to urgently address the threat of AMR in the continent.

As Africa strives to implement its Continental Free Trade Area, there is an increased risk that diseases will spread across borders, especially because of the weak disease surveillance systems and instability in some African countries. For this reason, port health security (PHS) will serve as the first line of defence to protect citizens and visitors against communicable diseases associated with cross-border movement of people and goods. PHS services are guided by the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005) and to accelerate the implementation of IHR by Member States as mandated by the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government, it is important to strengthen epidemic preparedness and response at seaports and airports.

The objectives of this visit, therefore, were to:

1. Assess and sign a letter of intent with the National School of Public Health, Rabat, Morocco, on joint public health workforce development aimed to strengthen the capacities of national public health institutes (NPHIs) in Africa.
2. Assess and sign a letter of intent with the Pasteur Institute, Casablanca, Morocco, on AMR collaboration.
3. Discuss strengthening port health security at international airports and seaports in Africa.

NARRATIVE REPORT

1. The team paid a courtesy call to the Minister and Secretary-General of the Ministry of Health.

Discussions centred on areas of partnership, with greater emphasis on public health workforce development, AMR surveillance, port health security, implementation of the public private philanthropic partnership initiative of the Africa CDC with the private sector in Morocco, and the need for Morocco to establish a national public health institute.

2. Partnership between Africa CDC and the National School of Public Health (ENSP):

- a. A letter of intent was signed between Africa CDC and ENSP.
- b. ENSP currently offers 15 online short courses. Africa CDC will examine the short courses and select those that will benefit Member States, particularly the French-speaking Member States. The selected courses will be incorporated and offered through the Africa CDC Institute for Workforce Development.
- c. Africa CDC was provisionally offered 10 slots at the ENSP master's degree in global health programme, which currently being administered by ENSP and the Barcelona Institute for Global Health.
- d. Africa CDC made a request to provide resource persons for the master's degree programme to incorporate the African perspective to the programme. The plan is to offer the following topics: Agenda 2063 and implications for public health; *Africa Health Strategy 2016–2030*; and Pandemic Governance in Africa.
- e. Africa CDC will start sponsoring students for the programme from September 2020. A call for applications will be published by September 2019 and candidates will be selected by February 2020. Successful candidates will be notified by May 2020.

3. Antimicrobial resistance surveillance

- a. A letter of intent on AMR surveillance was signed between Africa CDC and Institute Pasteur Casablanca, Morocco.
- b. The visiting team conducted a tour of the different departments at the institute.
- c. There were discussions on the potential areas of partnership with the different departments, particularly in envenomation and toxins, next generation sequencing and diagnostics.

4. Port health security at airports and seaports across Africa

The aviation sector and seaports need to be involved if Africa is to fully accelerate implementation of the IHR 2005, as requested by the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2017. Africa CDC is in the process of partnering with the aviation industry to develop an infectious diseases outbreak preparedness and response programme for Africa. It has started engaging with Ethiopian Airlines in this regard. Given that Morocco has well-developed port health security at its airports, it is important for Africa CDC, the Moroccan Port Authority and other key stakeholders to work together in developing a standardized programme for airports/airlines and seaports in the continent. This will support Africa's open skies and free trade agreements, which will soon become operational.

The following are key action points on the way forward:

1. Africa CDC to work more closely with the airlines and regional offices of ports associations in Nairobi to involve more stakeholders in the industry.
2. Assess major airlines and airports to identify gaps and needs.
3. Engage the departments of infrastructure and energy, and trade and industry of the African Union Commission about the planned initiative.
4. Hold a workshop in Casablanca with major stakeholders to develop a curriculum for capacity building in port health security.
5. Engage the World Economic Forum for partnership on a similar ongoing project.



Signing of the letter of intent on AMR surveillance between Africa CDC and Institute Pasteur in Morocco.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS AND RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

1. Dr Raji Tajudeen and Mohamed Moussif to exchange documents related to a training curriculum on port health security. Among these are the African Union Assembly Declaration on the IHRs and the draft training module on port health security.
2. Africa CDC and Mohamed Moussif to hold a conference call to discuss the way forward for the port health security agenda.
3. Prof. Abdelmounim Belalia to share a list of the online short courses with Dr Raji Tajudeen.
4. Dr Raji Tajudeen and Africa CDC colleagues to identify priority short courses to be incorporated into the programme of Africa CDC Institute for Workforce Development.
5. Dr Benjamin Djoudalbaye to liaise with the Africa CDC AMR team and facilitate linkage with Institute Pasteur on AMR surveillance.
6. Africa CDC and Prof. Maaroufi Abderrahmane to explore the possibility of public private philanthropic partnership with the private sector in Morocco.
7. Dr Raji Tajudeen together with the Office of the Director of Africa CDC to coordinate an advocacy visit to Morocco by the last quarter of 2019, focused on establishment of an NPHI.

CONTACTS

1. Dr Benjamin Djoudalbaye, Head, Division of Health Policy, Diplomacy and Communication, Africa CDC, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Email: BenjaminD@africa-union.org; Mobile +251 929033109.
2. Dr Raji Tajudeen, Head, Division of Public Health Institutes and Research, Africa CDC, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Email: Tajudeenr@africa-union.org; Mobile +251 921378263

