

**AFRICAN UNION EXTRAORDINARY HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT AND
PLEDGING CONFERENCE, 23-28 MAY 2022, MALABO, EQUATORIAL GUINEA**

*Report on the Side Event on the Role of Community Health Workers and Volunteers in
the Attainment of Universal Health Coverage and Health Security in Africa*



The African Union (AU) convened an Extraordinary AU Humanitarian Summit and Pledging Conference on 23 - 27 May 2022 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. The Extraordinary AU Humanitarian Summit and Pledging Conference deliberated on efforts set forth by African leaders to address the current humanitarian challenges that Africa is facing and have been exacerbated by the socio-economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and disasters across the Continent. During the summit, The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) partnered with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Funds (UNFPA) to co-organize a side event on the role of Community Health Workers (CHWs) in attaining Universal Health Coverage and Health Security. The purpose of the side event was to reinforce strategic partnership, government and donor's commitment to the scale-up and institutionalization of CHWs in Africa.

Participants were Member states representatives, experts from development agencies and civil society organizations involved in Community Health systems strengthening on the continent. One critical area that was highlighted by participants is the need to increase the protection of CHWs in terms of their safety, medical coverage, remuneration and career development instead of considering CHWs as volunteers or just cheap labor.

CHW side event recommended for the African Union Member States, Africa CDC, Partners and Stakeholders to define and clarify on the roles of CHWs, remuneration, protection and supervision while standardizing training curricula. The experts emphasized on the empowerment of the CHW with skills, tools, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and equipment to deliver the services effectively. To ensure the sustainability of service provision and counter the high turnover in the CHWs, there is a high need to institutionalize and remunerate community health workers commensurate with their time and effort. The motivation of CHW could be enhanced through optimal supervision, capacity building, a career pathway with opportunities to grow, and by equipping and protecting CHWs (medical cover, mental health and psychosocial support).

Key takeaway messages from the meeting included:

Member states with support from Partners and Stakeholders should

- Tailor policy guidelines and regulations that guide implementation of CHW programs and ensure representation of the voices of the people and CHW in policy and planning processes
- Adapt a robust governance framework that addresses the needs and interests of a wide range of stakeholders
- Develop country-led contextualized models of CHW programs that ensure sustainability
- Guarantee and ensure availability of medical supplies and commodities at primary Health Care and Community Levels to meet the population's demand.
- Develop long-term strategies for increasing sustainable, domestic financial support for strong community health programs implemented at scale
- Adopt a whole-of-society, whole-of-government approach to holistically address the needs of their communities and deliver an integrated package of services at the community level.

The side event was concluded with a consensus on the partners and stakeholders to operationalize and track the implementation progress of the continental initiatives and declarations on Community Health Workers and community health systems strengthening. Africa CDC will build on the outcome of this side event to further drive the CHW agenda across the continent.

