

## **Africa CDC launches web-based tool to better manage public health emergency workforce deployments**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, 1 SEPTEMBER 2020.** The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), in partnership with the International Health Regulations (IHR) Strengthening Project of Public Health England (PHE), today launched a new web-based tool, AVoHC Net, to facilitate rapid deployment and better administration of a standby workforce for public health emergencies across Africa.

AVoHC Net will particularly facilitate easy and rapid access to updated profiles of members of the African Volunteer Health Corps (AVoHC); exchange of relevant information with partners for public health emergency deployments; training of experts on disaster preparedness, management and response; and access to country-specific health profiles for risk mapping and vulnerability assessment.

“With this tool, which enables us to maintain a current repository of potential deployable workforce, Africa CDC will be able to quickly deploy urgently needed personnel to any part of the continent with minimum delay. We are very pleased to support this work,” said Dr Ebere Okereke, IHR Team Lead for PHE.

Following the Ebola virus disease outbreak in parts of West Africa in 2014, the African Union Heads of State and Government by Decision No. Assembly/AU/Dec.570 (XXV) of June 2015 authorized the creation of AVoHC as a multidisciplinary standby workforce to support response to public health emergencies in any part of Africa.

Since its creation, membership of AVoHC has grown to over 800 experts in epidemiology, laboratory, logistics, communication, social science, environmental health, animal health, and incident management. Some of these experts were deployed by the African Union to support response to Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

In fulfilment of its mandate and as part of implementation of its operational framework, Africa CDC took over management of AVoHC in 2017 to enhance its ability to provide surge capacity support to African Union Member States during public health emergencies. Since then Africa CDC has deployed members of the AVoHC team to support response to Ebola virus disease outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo and currently to support response to COVID-19 pandemic in some African countries.

Given the importance of AVoHC for Africa and the diversity of its membership, AVoHC Net will allow systematic expansion and capacity building for the AVoHC team, thus contributing to the achievement of the public health workforce development agenda of Africa CDC.

“Africa CDC is deploying community workers and community healthcare workers in different countries to help fight COVID-19 pandemic, but we need to be able to do this more rapidly and in a more coordinated manner. We also need to know the training needs

of the experts being deployed and be able to provide training appropriately. With AVoHC Net, Africa CDC will be in a better position to provide targeted workforce development support for public health emergencies as an integral part of the health systems strengthening agenda for Africa,” said Dr John Nkengasong, Director of Africa CDC.

#### **About Africa CDC**

Africa CDC is a specialized technical institution of the African Union that strengthens the capacity and capability of Africa’s public health institutions as well as partnerships to detect and respond quickly and effectively to disease threats and outbreaks, based on data-driven interventions and programmes. Learn more at: <http://www.africacdc.org>

#### **About Public Health England**

PHE is an executive agency of the UK Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities, through world-leading science, research, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. PHE’s International Health Regulations (IHR) Strengthening Project is a UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) funded project that contributes towards strengthening capacity and capability for IHR compliance in selected countries and regions. Learn more at [www.gov.uk/phe](http://www.gov.uk/phe)

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