

Strengthening Public Health Emergency Operations Centres in Africa:

A Call to Action

*On the sidelines of 41st Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union and the 4th Mid-Year Coordination Meeting (MYCM) of the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECS),
in Lusaka, Zambia, 16th July 2022.*

We, the Heads of State and Government and leaders of delegations:

RECALLING the Heads of State and Government's Declaration on 4th July 2017 on Accelerating Implementation of the International Health Regulations in Africa; which seeks to address the increasing public health events and recurrent epidemics on the continent and to prevent, protect against, control and provide a public health response to the international spread of diseases.

DEEPLY CONCERNED about the increasing number of public health events and recurrent epidemics including the COVID-19 pandemic on the continent; **FURTHER CONCERNED** by the enormous socio-economic impact of these public health emergencies.

NOTING the inadequate implementation of the International Health regulations (IHR).

COGNIZANT of the fact that disease threats, epidemics, public health emergencies and pandemics are a social, economic, and security threat for the continent and therefore pose a huge risk to the achievement of the continental aspiration, *Agenda 2063 – the Africa We Want*.

NOTING the duty and political mandate of ministries of health and National Public Health Institutes (NPHIs) to prepare for and respond to public health emergencies, and establishment of strong resilient and adaptive health systems with effective coordination, collaboration and sharing of information and other resources;

COGNIZANT of the fact that a Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) is a critical element for coordinating critical life-saving data, information and resources that help Member States to prepare better for and respond effectively and efficiently to public health emergencies;

MINDFUL of the fact that the African Union Member States are at different stages of establishment of national functional PHEOCs to fulfill the International Health Regulations (IHR) commitments.

TAKE NOTE of the close collaborations and the efforts being made by the African Union Commission, Africa CDC, WHO and all partners in establishment and strengthening of PHEOC capacities in Africa.

Hereby make the following Lusaka Call to Action:

URGES all African Union Member States and partners to recognize and prioritize PHEOCs as an important pillar in health emergency preparedness and response.

CALL UPON all African Union Member States to make a commitment to establish and/or strengthen functional PHEOCs in each Africa Union Member State.

CALL UPON all AU Member States, African Union Commission, Africa CDC, all partners and global leaders to join us in:

- Accelerating the establishment and/or strengthening of national functional PHEOCs under Ministries of Health or National Public Health Institutes in all AU Member States by 2026.
- Ensuring that African Union Member States develop clear PHEOCs roadmaps, and PHEOCs are entrusted with legal mandates, equipped with the right infrastructure, human and financial resources.
- Prioritizing mobilization of resources necessary for accelerated implementation of national PHEOCs roadmaps in line with Africa's New Public Health Order.

FURTHER CALL UPON the African Union Commission and Africa CDC:

- to put in place a continental mechanism and structure to coordinate the accelerated establishment/strengthening of PHEOCs in Africa and collaborate with all relevant stakeholders.
- to inform AU policy organs of the progress made in implementing this Call To Action annually until 2026.

The Lusaka Call to Action declared on this **16th Day of July 2022, in Lusaka, Zambia.**

Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC),
African Union Commission
Roosevelt Street W21 K19, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia