

STRENGTHENING MORTALITY SURVEILLANCE IN AFRICA: AFRICA CDC LAUNCHES CONTINENTAL FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT TO SUPPORT MEMBER STATES

PRESS RELEASE

Addis Ababa, 12 October 2022 – The Republic of Zambia in collaboration with the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and the Africa Union Commission hosted a High-level Expert Panel to launch the Continental Framework for Strengthening Mortality Surveillance in Africa. This Framework document was developed through series of consultations since 2019, through which several feedbacks and inputs were received from all stakeholders, including Member States and partners, leading to its launch on 29 September 2022, in Lusaka, Zambia.

The Continental Framework for strengthening mortality surveillance draws on the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic and other previous public health emergencies to provide guidance for AU Member States on how to leverage existing information systems to build their national repositories for mortality data in order to strengthen vital statistics, including births and deaths and use the resulting

information to better secure the population's health.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to significant loss of lives and livelihoods in Africa, and despite the over 12 million cases and over 250,000 deaths documented, the true burden of the pandemic on health systems still remains unknown.

Vice President of the Republic of Zambia, Her Honour Mrs. Mutale W. K. Nalumango, who graced the occasion on behalf of her government called upon fellow African leaders and AU Member States to prioritise investments both financially and in human capital, to ensure the establishment and operationalization of mortality surveillance systems that are aligned with country priorities and international or regional standards; adding that the information generated through such systems would provide leaders with insights into disparities in disease burden across geographic and demographic



groups. She admonished all the fifty-five (55) AU Member States to utilise this important guidance document to develop holistic mortality surveillance systems to ensure availability of credible and timely mortality data across health systems on the continent.

The Continental Framework is guided by the vision of the Heads of State and Government, "Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want" and the New Public Health Order which lays out the five pillars required for Africa to ensure its health security including: i) strengthened institutions for Public Health, ii) strengthened workforce for public health, iii) domestic resources, iv) local manufacturing and v) action oriented and respectful partnerships. The framework aligns with existing regional initiatives such as the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI CRVS), the Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA), and the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa 2017-2026 (SHaSA), Africa Health Strategy, 2016-2030 among others.

Africa CDC's Acting Director, Dr Ahmed Ogwel Ouma in his opening remarks thanked all stakeholders for their contributions towards

the development of the continental framework; He further emphasized Africa CDC's mandate guided by the African Union's ambition to support all Member States so that each can have a national repository and database for all mortality data.

In his statement as a panellist, Hon. Chea Sanford Wesseh, Assistant Minister for Vital Statistics at Ministry of Health, Republic of Liberia, echoed the need for strong partnerships, calling upon development partners and stakeholders to align their resources with the priorities of the continent to ensure the operationalisation of the Continental Framework. Minister Wesseh disclosed that the document contains all necessary strategies required to strengthen health systems, civil registration and vital statistics.

Delegates from AU Member States, Ministers of Health, International Partners and Regional Economic Communities attended the High-level Expert panel forum and witnessed the launch of the Continental Framework for Strengthening Mortality Surveillance in Africa.

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About the African Union

The African Union spearheads Africa's development and integration in close collaboration with African Union Member States, the Regional Economic Communities and African citizens. AU Vision: to accelerate progress towards an integrated, prosperous and inclusive Africa, at peace with itself, playing a dynamic role in the continental and global arena, effectively driven by an accountable, efficient and responsive Commission.

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About the Africa CDC

Africa CDC is the continental health agency of the African Union which supports Member States in their efforts to strengthen health systems and improve surveillance, emergency response, prevention and control of diseases.

Learn more at: <http://www.africacdc.org>

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