

ADVANCING HEALTH SECURITY, SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING AND INNOVATION

COMMUNIQUE: SENIOR APPOINTMENTS

Addis Ababa, 8 April 2026

The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) is pleased to announce the appointment of a new group of senior leaders to reinforce the institution's capacity to deliver on its mandate and accelerate implementation of the Africa Health Security and Sovereignty Agenda.

The appointments strengthen priority areas across pooled procurement, immunization, pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, regional coordination, maternal and child health, and digital transformation. The newly appointed officials are:

Dr. Tala Jallow (the Gambia), Director, Africa Pooled Procurement Mechanism (APPM)

A former lead pharmacist for the Gambia and global health leader with more than 30 years of experience in pharmaceutical systems, market shaping and supply chains. She previously helped scale the Global Fund's pooled procurement mechanism across 60 countries and will strengthen continental access to affordable, quality-assured health products and regional manufacturing.

Dr. Folake Olayinka (Nigeria), Director of Immunization

An internationally recognized immunization leader with nearly three decades of experience in vaccine policy, polio eradication, maternal and child health and pandemic response. Most recently USAID's Immunization Technical Lead, she will help drive stronger routine immunization, zero-dose recovery and vaccine strategy across Africa.

Dr. Tolbert G. Nyenswah (Liberia), Director, Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response (PPPR)

A Liberian public health leader and lawyer with over 20 years of experience in epidemic control and health security. He led Liberia's Ebola response and later served as founding Director General of the National Public Health Institute of Liberia, bringing deep expertise in emergency management, surveillance and resilient health systems.

Professor Yap Boum II (Cameroon) -Head of Emergency Preparedness and Response Division

Prof. Yap is a global health leader and microbiologist who served as Deputy Incident Manager for the continental Mpox IMST. He is a professor of microbiology and

epidemiology at Yale, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, and the University of Yaoundé. He has held senior roles with Epicentre, MSF and the Institut Pasteur in Bangui, driving research, outbreak response, and health systems strengthening. His expertise is on advancing equitable healthcare, infectious disease research, and building African capacity to respond to public health challenges

Professor Aliko Ahmed (Nigeria), Special Regional Representative of the Director-General, Western Africa Regional Collaborating Center (RCC)

A global health diplomat and public health physician with more than 30 years of experience in policy influence, executive leadership and health systems strengthening. He has held senior public health leadership roles in the United Kingdom and founded the Public Health Africa Policy Forum at Chatham House.

Dr. Thaddée Ndikumana (Burundi), Special Regional Representative of the Director-General, Central Africa RCC

A Burundian public health physician and former Minister of Public Health and the Fight Against AIDS, with nearly two decades of leadership in health governance, disease control and social protection. He has led national coordination platforms on COVID-19, Ebola preparedness, tuberculosis control and health systems development.

Dr. Peter Kumpalume (Malawi), Special Representative of Africa CDC, Southern Africa RCC

A former Minister of Health of Malawi, academic leader and pharmaceutical R&D expert who combines

experience in health sector reform, emergency preparedness and medicines development. He brings senior leadership experience from government, academia and industry, including GlaxoSmithKline R&D and Kamuzu University of Health Sciences.

Mr. Vasilis Koulolias (Botswana), Special Advisor to the Director-General on Digital Health, Artificial Intelligence and Innovation

A seasoned digital transformation and e-governance strategist with over 25 years of experience advising governments, international organizations and academia. He led Botswana's SmartBots national digital strategy and brings expertise in digital public systems, AI adoption, interoperability, monitoring and innovation ecosystems.

To reinforce the Center for Sustainable Financing, two Heads of Division were previously appointed.

Nadia Yakhelef (Algeria), Head of Health Economics and Financing

A health economist with expertise in public health, health economics, international cooperation, and monitoring & evaluation. She led the development of performance frameworks and COVID-19 response platforms across Francophone Africa at Expertise France, and contributed to global health initiatives with organizations including WHO and Médecins Sans Frontières. She is a respected and called-upon expert, including in cost-effectiveness, health benefits packages, resource allocation, supported by strong analytical skills and a solid academic and

research background.

Gerald Manthalu (Malawi), Head of Public Financial Management and the Lusaka Agenda

Former Director of Planning and Policy Development in the Ministry of Health of Malawi, with over 20 years of experience in health systems strengthening and reform, including integrated primary health care, health financing, public financial management, and monitoring and evaluation. Proven leader in advancing holistic, system-wide approaches at national and global levels, with strong partnerships across donors, global health initiatives and technical agencies.

Collectively, the new appointees bring decades of experience from government, multilateral institutions, public health agencies, academia and industry. Their expertise spans pharmaceutical systems and market shaping, immunization and vaccine policy, epidemic preparedness and emergency response, health diplomacy and regional engagement, primary health care and maternal and child health, and digital public systems and innovation.

These appointments reflect Africa CDC's continued investment in leadership capable of supporting Member States, strengthening institutional performance and advancing a more resilient, self-reliant and people-centred public health architecture for Africa.



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The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention is the specialized technical institution of the African Union that supports Member States in strengthening their public health systems and improving their capacity to prevent, detect and respond to disease threats and other public health challenges



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