

Research, Development and Pharmaceuticals for better health in East Africa

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EAIDSNet

East African Intergraded Diseases Surveillance Network (EAIDSNet)

- A collaborative effort of the Ministries of Health of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda as well as national health research, and academic institutions.
- Initiated in 2000, NIMR, Dar es Salam, TZ
- Supported by Rockefeller Foundation through the DSN Initiative

Mission

Mission

To improve epidemic preparedness, response and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases in the East African Region

Objectives

- Enhance and strengthen cross-country and cross-institutional collaboration through regional coordination of activities for the prevention and control of both human and animal (zoonotic) diseases under the “One Health” Initiative;
- Promote exchange and dissemination of appropriate information on Integrated Disease Surveillance (IDS) and other disease control activities

Objectives cont'd

- Harmonize integrated disease surveillance systems in the region;
- Strengthen capacity for implementing integrated disease surveillance and control activities;
- Ensure continuous exchange of expertise and best practices for integrated disease surveillance and control

Mandate

Establishing a strong Network to generate useful epidemiological information for early warning of impending epidemics as well as supporting joint planning and joint implementation of disease control measures

Main Achievements

- Advocated for a mechanism of Disease surveillance and control in member states; now established
- Priority diseases lists drawn for all states
- Established strong linkages between research, disease control, and policy and decision making in member states
- Strengthened communication and collaboration among partner states in all aspects of disease surveillance

Main Achievements

- Strengthened capacity and collaboration between districts health teams of border districts in disease surveillance and control
- Joint training programs for staff of member states to implement disease surveillance and control
- Inter-country assistance during outbreaks
- Exchange of information through a quarterly bulletin
- Establishing a Health Desk in the EAC Secretariat
- Initiated ProMED–EAFR in 2009 in collaboration with the International Society of Infectious Diseases

Main Achievements

- Achievements were made through implementation of two main projects”
 - “The Regional Project to Strengthen Cross-border Human and Animal Diseases Prevention and Control in EAC Partner States”, and
 - Together with the ECSA Health Community, WHO, CDC are implementing the World Bank funded EAPHLNetwork Project.

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- The provision of safe, efficacious and affordable essential medicines and other quality health commodities to the people of the East African Community region remains a major challenge.
- This is because of inadequate local production of pharmaceuticals and over reliance on importation of finished pharmaceutical products and related health supplies from outside the region.

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- To address this challenge, it is crucial to build and strengthen the local pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity.
- This requires building and strengthening both national and regional capacity to manufacture affordable, efficacious, high-quality and safe generic essential medicines within the region.
- The EAC developed a Regional Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan of Action (EACRPMPoA): 2012-2016 to assist in this challenge. (Lots of Thanks to the Govt of Germany for the support of this process)

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- This is a roadmap to guide the EAC towards evolving an efficient and effective regional pharmaceutical manufacturing industry that will supply national, regional and international markets.
- Strategies: One of the strategies is mainstreaming innovation, research and development
 - To this end Member states are supporting research institutions through allocation of more funds for innovations:

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- In Uganda :UNHRO and its 4 constituent Research Institutes; Makerere University and other Universities; the Institute for Industrial Development and Research,
- In Tanzania: NIMR, University of Dar es Salaam and Muhimbiri University plus other universities,
- In Kenya: KEMRI, the University of Nairobi and other Universities
- In Rwanda: the Institute of Scientific and Technological Research, The National University of Rwanda and Kigali Institute of Science and Technology (KIST),
- In Burundi: the University of Burundi

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- Some of the Institutions already have production lines:
 - KEMRI has ELISA and RDT productions
 - Makerere university and UVRI have an Ebola Virus RDT undergoing efficacy trial testing before production

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Challenges:

- Poor funding of the research institutions by member states, and in most cases the governments only support staff emoluments. As a result, most of the research activities are donor-funded and therefore do not necessarily address regional health priorities.
- Additionally, most research funding targets basic and operational research which does not necessarily lead to product development.
- The linkages between academia, research institutes and industry are so weak that they rarely collaborate in research and development.

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Opportunities

- The EAC population currently stands at 127 million and the region is moving towards implementing the Common Market Protocol which came into effect in July 2010.
- All five countries are among those identified globally as having a high burden of HIV, TB and malaria. In addition, the region is faced with other infectious and parasitic diseases.
- Non-Communicable Diseases pose a growing challenge too.

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Opportunities

- According to a 2002 Decision of the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Council, based on the 2001 Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, Least Developed Countries are exempted until the 1 January 2016 from implementing, applying or enforcing the TRIPS provisions on patents and the protection of undisclosed information with respect to pharmaceutical products.
- In the interim transition period LDC-based producers may use substances that would otherwise be patented and LDC-based traders may import and sell patented ingredients (**It is getting late to take advantage of this**)

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- All Partner States are reviewing/developing policies and/or legislative frameworks that will enhance availability of safe and efficacious medicines in the market;
- Presence of strong and vibrant health R & D in the region
- Strong focus on mainstreaming African traditional medicines in to national health systems through development of appropriate policies

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Way forward

- Pharmaceutical Research and Development capacity enhancement in the region through support to research and training institutions;
- Promotion and enhancement on the use of locally sourced inputs (including herbal or natural products) for production of active pharmaceutical ingredients, excipients and
- Implementing the road map

End

- Thank you for your attention