

: Programme

Potsdam Spring Dialogues 2015 **Disease Control and Prevention** **in Africa: Current Reforms to** **Strengthen Regional Cooperation**

Hotel Voltaire

26-27 March 2015

Conference language

English

Cooperating partners

Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Eschborn/Bonn
WeltTrends, Potsdam



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BACKGROUND

The Ebola outbreak which began in Guinea in West Africa around a year ago has been declared a global health emergency by the World Health Organization. According to the WHO, more than 8,000 people have died in the outbreak so far (as at 6 January 2015). The epidemic also poses a threat to food security in the affected region and is worsening its economic situation. In September 2014, in response to the crisis in the affected countries and the threat of a further spread of the disease, it was discussed by the UN Security Council – the first time that the Council has regarded a disease outbreak as a threat to international peace and security. Antibiotic resistance, neglected and poverty-related diseases and Ebola will also feature on the agenda at the G7 Summit in Bavaria in early June 2015.

According to experts all over the world, the reason why this latest Ebola outbreak has had such devastating effects is not only the high virulence of the pathogen itself, but also – and above all – the overstretched health systems in the affected countries, with poorly equipped hospitals and a shortage of appropriately skilled staff, combined with a lack of awareness across broad sections of society and largely uncoordinated disease control. Regional integration can play a key role in addressing these issues in future. As early as 2005, the WHO, in its *International Health Regulations*, urged member states to improve their transnational cooperation in this area.

The African Union (AU) and some regional organisations have now responded. Ahead of the 2015 AU Summit, a taskforce met in Addis Ababa in autumn 2014 to discuss key priorities for the establishment of an *African Centre for Disease Control and Prevention*, to be functioning by mid 2015. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is also planning to set up its own *Regional Centre for Disease Prevention and Control*. The *West African Health Organisation* (WAHO) was established some years ago and aims to promote a collective and strategic response to health problems in the region through the harmonisation of the policies of the member states, pooling of resources, and cooperation with one another and with others. And in Southern Africa, leaders met at an extraordinary summit in summer 2014 and pledged to adopt more intensive prevention and control measures. There are plans to set up a fund here to provide member states with immediate financial assistance in a health emergency.

The Potsdam Spring Dialogues will examine existing and new initiatives on an Africa-wide and regional level and will discuss more effective ways of preventing communicable diseases and curbing outbreaks in future. We will also look at experience from other regions of the world and at the role and possible contribution of international actors (e.g. the WHO and non-governmental organisations).

: Thursday, 26 March 2015

09.00 hrs Registration

WELCOME

09.30 hrs **Dr Helmuth Markov**
Minister of Justice and for Europe and Consumer Protection, Potsdam
Dr Gerd Harms
State Secretary (ret.), Deputy Chairperson of the
Executive Committee of the Development and Peace Foundation (sef:)

SESSION I

EBOLA – LESSONS LEARNED FOR PREVENTION AND CONTROL

The keynote speeches at this year's Potsdam Spring Dialogues will consider the lessons of the Ebola epidemic and ask: a) how regional integration can help countries become better prepared for, and protect themselves from, comparable scenarios in future; and b) how the international response and cooperation must be improved.

CHAIR

Dr Gerd Harms

10.00 hrs Keynotes

Responding more effectively to health emergencies through regional integration – the African perspective

Ambassador Jongopie Siaka Stevens

Embassy of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Berlin

Health emergencies: a stress test for international and foreign policy – the German perspective

Ambassador Walter Lindner

Special Representative of the Federal Government for the Fight against Ebola,
Federal Foreign Office, Berlin

Lessons from the Ebola crisis for global health governance

Dr Ruediger Krech

Director, Office of the Assistant Director-General
Health Systems and Innovation (HIS),
World Health Organization, Geneva

followed by Plenary discussion

12.00 hrs Lunch

SESSION II

NEW INSTITUTIONS – MORE EFFICIENCY?

With the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, calls within Africa for transnational disease prevention and control systems have become louder. In autumn 2014, the African Union agreed to speed up the establishment of the *African Centre for Disease Control and Prevention*. The Centre's activities will include establishing event-based surveillance systems, addressing gaps in International Health Regulations compliance in member states; supporting public health emergency preparedness and response; regional and country level hazard mapping and risk assessments. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) also plans to set up its own Regional Centre for Disease Prevention and Control in order to strengthen regional multisectoral coordination in the fight against pandemics.

A number of institutions for transnational disease prevention and control already exist. The *West African Health Organisation* (WAHO), established in the late 1980s, aims to promote a collective and strategic response to health problems in the region through the harmonisation of the policies of the member states, pooling of resources, and cooperation with one another and with others. And the WHO *Regional Committee for Africa* has long supported the formulation and implementation of member states' joint policies in the health sector.

The panel will therefore start by discussing the role of these institutions in combating the latest Ebola outbreak. Which reforms are needed to make their work more effective? Which lessons can be learned for the benefit of the planned new institutions? The panel will also look at experience gained in other regions of the world where regional disease prevention and control centres already exist.

CHAIR

Dr Günther Taube

Director Division Education, Health, Social Protection,
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, Bonn

13.00 hrs

Inputs

Dr Olawale I. Maiyegun

Director, Department of Social Affairs,
African Union Commission, Addis Ababa

Sani Ali

Professional Officer for Planning,
West African Health Organisation (WAHO), Bobo-Dioulasso

Comments

PD Dr Lars Schaade

Vice President,
Robert-Koch-Institute, Berlin

Ludy Suryantoro

Senior Advisor – High Level Government and External Relations,
Office of Assistant Director-General,
World Health Organisation, Geneva

followed by

Plenary discussion

15.00 hrs

Coffee break

SESSION III

THE HEALTH WORKFORCE: SAFEGUARDING QUALITY AND QUANTITY

The Ebola crisis has shown that health systems can only operate with well-qualified doctors and nurses. Where the local labour market cannot meet demand it makes matters worse. Also the proposed post-2015 sustainable development goals will remain aspirational, unless they will be accompanied by strategies involving transformational efforts on health workforce capability. But improving health services coverage and health outcomes is not an easy task: It is dependent on their availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality as it is written in the GHWA Draft Synthesis Paper. In Session III, we will discuss how a regional approach can help to improve human resources in individual countries, with a focus on health workforce policies and management, curriculum development, quality assurance and incentive schemes. WHO Africa's *Road map for scaling up the health workforce for improved health service delivery in the African Region (2012–2025)* will also be analysed to identify opportunities and challenges.

CHAIR

Professor Raimund Krämer

Professor for International and Comparative Politics at the University of Potsdam,
Managing Director of the foreign policy journal WeltTrends,
Member of the Advisory Board of the Development and Peace Foundation (sef:)

15.30 hrs

Inputs

Dr Ruediger Krech

Director, Office of the Assistant Director-General
Health Systems and Innovation (HIS),
World Health Organization, Geneva

Comments

Professor Yoswa M. Dambisya

Director General,
ECSA Health Community, Arusha

Dr Andreas Stadler

Head of Health System Unit,
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, Bonn

followed by

Plenary discussion

CULTURAL PROGRAMME AND RECEPTION

18.00 hrs

Guided tour through Sanssouci Palace and Park

19.00 hrs

Reception hosted by the Minister-President of Land Brandenburg
Welcome by

Anne Quart

State Secretary for Europe and Consumer Protection, Potsdam

: Friday, 27 March 2015

09.00 hrs

Registration

SESSION IV

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND PHARMACEUTICALS

Access to the right medicines is the key to effective treatment and can also curb the spread of diseases. But in many regions of Africa, safe, high-quality and affordable drugs are in short supply. There are many reasons for this, ranging from poverty and the high cost of medicines to inefficient supply chains. The situation is exacerbated by unfavourable trade regulations, including restrictive intellectual property rights (keywords: TRIPS/generics) at the global level. For some years, various international organisations, including UNIDO and UNCTAD, and some African regional organisations such as the *East African Community* (EAC), the *Southern African Development Community* (SADC) and the *New Partnership for Africa's Development* (NEPAD) have been supporting local production of pharmaceuticals in African countries. In Panel II, we will therefore discuss, with reference to specific best practice examples, the opportunities and challenges of local pharmaceutical production in Africa and its influence in terms of improving access to medicines, including for low-income groups.

CHAIR

Anja Gomm

Head of project "Development Oriented Trade Policy, Trade and Investment Promotion";
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, Berlin

09.30 hrs

Inputs

Dr Julius Julian Lutwama

Senior Principal Research Officer and
Head of the Department of Arbovirology and Emerging,
Viral Infections of Uganda Virus Research Institute (UVRI/US CDC), Entebbe

Margareth Ndomondo Sigonda

Pharmaceutical Coordinator,
AMRH Programme, African Union-NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, Johannesburg

Comment

Emmanuel Mujuru

Chairperson,
Southern African Generic Medicines Association, Harare

followed by

Plenary discussion

11.00 hrs

Coffee break

SESSION V**LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AHEAD OF CRISES**

The international community's response to the current Ebola epidemic has largely consisted of damage limitation. As the situation steadily worsened, more money was provided for humanitarian aid, development cooperation and research in order to halt the spread of the virus. But alongside these practical crisis management measures, long-term engagement is needed with the aim of establishing well-performing health systems that provide comprehensive healthcare for the population as a whole. What are the responsibilities of individual countries and their regional organisations in this context, and how much responsibility lies with the international community? What role can private actors play in financing these systems? What action can be taken to ensure that funds are not channelled primarily into disease control programmes of direct relevance to global goals (such as the MDGs) while the task of building sustainable, well-performing health systems is neglected?

CHAIR**Dr Cornelia Ulbert**

Executive Director,
Institute for Development and Peace,
University Duisburg-Essen

11.30 hrs

Closing Keynotes

Hans-Peter Baur

Head of Directorate 30:
Peace; democracy; human rights and social development,
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Bonn

Dr Khama Rogo

Head, Health in Africa Initiative,
World Bank, Nairobi

Dr Maximilian Gertler

Epidemiologist,
Board of Directors,
Médecins Sans Frontières, Berlin

followed by plenary discussion

13.00 hrs

Closing remarks by the organisers

followed by

Light refreshments